

ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS CONFERENCE CENTRE BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND

July 2 – 4, 2013

**Tuesday 2 July, 2013
Morning Session**



**Opening of Conference
09.30 – 11.30**

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Delegates, we are just about to commence. Before we begin, first of all you are welcome to the Assembly Buildings, but in terms of the housekeeping I have to call your attention to a health and safety announcement. In the event of an emergency our alarm is a siren. If this goes off we would ask you to leave the building calmly by any of the exits. Please remember to go down the stairs and the lift must not be used. The assembly point is across the road at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution – that's the big school across the road. Thanks very much.

Fáilte roimh Bhéal Feirste. Our Conference, held in the year of the Lockout, is vitally important in the time and history of the trade union movement and we are pleased to have a number of guest speakers with us. The first guest speaker we have is the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir and we are calling on Máirtín to address Conference.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, Lord Mayor of Belfast

Delegates, thank you for coming to Belfast in the year of the Lockout. You coming to Belfast shows how important Eugene McGlone and Patricia McKeown are. You will be back in Belfast for Conference next year or the year after in Dublin but it is great to have you back in Dublin for the first time in I think six or seven years. And, you will be here for three days and you will get to be our guests in City Hall tonight. And we welcome the leadership of the trade union movement across Ireland coming to Belfast because as the events of the last ten days, the Anglo tapes have shown your analysis of the economic crisis and the economic recession is closer to the mark, more accurate, more precise than any analysis that has come out of the palaces of Government whether in Brussels or Dublin. On top of that your view of the future is a view which is more compassionate, which values everyone in society, which will build up society in the time ahead rather than destroy the gains we have made. So, for those reasons you are most welcome in this city of Bhéal Feirste for the next few days.

The lesson of the last few years is that austerity doesn't work. The figures this week, I see someone reading the Irish Times down there, the figures this morning in the Irish Times for youth unemployment in Spain and Greece are one in two. I don't believe that the figures are as frightening as that south of the border but I am sure that they are up around 25/26/27 per cent for youth unemployment, but in Belfast 20 per cent of our young people are unemployed even though many of them are graduates and skilled. The evidence therefore is clear across Europe that the policies of austerity don't work. And, in fact, they are driving us into a deeper recession and they are digging a deeper hole for the peoples of Europe.

I want to in our own modest way tell you what Belfast City Council has done with cross-party support – six parties – many different views on the big issues which divide us in Belfast are identity, allegiance and heritage – but six parties have come together to back an investment package and that investment package in my view is the polar opposite of the austerity packages we have seen in other jurisdictions in other areas. In other fora I have appraised the management of Belfast City Council who do a great job and in this forum I want to praise the workers of Belfast City Council – a magnificent workforce – 2,500 workers in the most varied of positions from the zoo to waste management to leisure to economic development and they are not only offering and delivering a top class service but they are innovative, they react quick and swiftly in crises whether it was the flooding crisis last year or the issues we had around the flag protest last December, it was Belfast City Council staff which made sure the city kept moving forward so we are very grateful for that. The only people I won't praise are the Councillors today, but with the workforce we have and with the support of our management team, we have come together to have an investment package that I think will provide the catalyst for the emergence from recession for Belfast – I think it is starting already. So, over the next 10 years we will spend £106m on new leisure facilities. We will oppose the privatisation of leisure but we will argue very strongly for a complete new start for leisure provision across the city and that we hope will start very, very shortly. It will create jobs; it will create better services, and improve the health of our people. We are also spending £150m on an investment package which includes a new convention centre. This is a marvellous Conference theatre, and we will have a new convention centre, a new innovation centre on the peace line at Springvale West, Belfast, a new digital, work on the rebirth of the Lagan Canal and many other projects including the marginalised areas of Poleglass and Twinbrook, West Belfast which will come into Belfast and work in Castlereagh as well which has been under served by its Council of late. The message from Belfast is that if the Council doesn't intervene to create jobs, no one else will. We need to give the private sector the confidence to engage as well.

And, the last statistic I leave you with, and I think it shows the leadership of the workforce of Belfast City Council and the management is that we recently announced an apprenticeship programme – the first one for many years – on the Council and we brought on ten apprenticeships and they have just started aged between 17 and 37. For those ten apprenticeships we had 758 applications and our message to the rest of the city, not only the private sector but also the Health Trusts and some of our other anchor institutions such as universities is that we need to give hope to our young people, hope to the long term unemployed by creating more employment opportunities. I think you will see in the time ahead Belfast City Council implementing the policies and strategies which you have been pressing for, for the last few years and which I think can lead to the renaissance of Belfast in the time ahead and reduce that horrific figure of 20% youth unemployment and put the city back to work and back on its feet.

So, have a great three days at Conference. I am sure I will see you tonight in City Hall. The more youthful or those with longer staying power, I believe you are going to be here on Thursday so I might see you on Thursday as well, but have a great Conference and thank you for coming to Belfast. Go raibh math agat.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Lord Mayor. Can I now call upon Paddy Mackell, President of Belfast Trades Council.

Paddy Mackell, President of Belfast & District Trades Council

A hUachtarán, a chairde, a chomrádaithe, tá mé iontach bródúil fáilte a chur romhaibh uilig go Bhéal Feirste ar feadh cupla lá.

President, brother and sisters and comrades, I am extremely proud to welcome you here today and over the next few days to Belfast. On behalf of the Belfast and District Trade Union Council it is a privilege to offer a few thoughts of welcome at the start of this important Conference. I do hope you find some time over the next few days to look at some of the attractions which Belfast has to offer. Belfast has a rich and it has a vibrant history not least its links to the Irish language movement which was once a movement which encountered no barriers and can do so again.

One hundred and one years ago, James Connolly on behalf of the Belfast Trades Council, proposed a motion to the 1912 ICTU Conference calling for the establishment of an Irish Labour Party to represent the interests of workers in the wider community. A year later the Dublin Lockout was on one level a severe blow to the conviction that workers could win this struggle against the bosses, the capitalists and the ruling classes. In response to the treatment of the workers in the Lockout, with the help of Larkin and Markevich, they formed a Citizen's Army to protect workers who stood up for their rights. Within three years, however, Larkin had gone to America, Connolly had been executed and Markevich was in prison. The fledgling labour movement took a back seat as Ireland went through years of conflict linked to a struggle for national independence from Britain. In this decade of centenaries it is worth reflecting that the labour movement lost its way at that time and could be argued has yet to reclaim our position in the debate over who is best to represent the interests of working people. But the old idea that Labour must wait can no longer hold any relevance or support in this movement. Whilst there are indeed changed times and quite rightly we are forthright in our opposition to all forms of violence, it is worth contrasting our stance with that of Governments.

As an alternative to the G8, Belfast Trades Council, ICTU Youth and others argued and organised for four days of events offering and demonstrating that another world is possible. In our protest marches in Belfast and in Enniskillen against the G8 Summit and its leaders, we walked good-humouredly, we chanted and we sang our way through the rain and then the sun shine peacefully demonstrating, peacefully protesting. Despite intelligence held by Government security agencies that there was no likelihood of violence we are met by £80m worth of aggression in the form of thousands of hard and heavily armed police officers, hundreds of armed vehicles, water cannons at the ready, dogs on standby, helicopters following our every move, snatchie squads and jeeps itching to be unleashed, and the photographing and filming of ordinary workers and their families including children. This was apparently a proportionate and justifiable response according to the UK Government and some in the Stormont Executive and the ever compliant media alike.

With reference to concepts such as anti-capitalism and socialism, they may be frowned upon by some in this movement, there can be no doubt that anyone in this Conference today that the current economic system operating in Ireland and in Britain has completely failed ordinary working people. We do have to commence an inclusive debate about developing a serious alternative beyond a common good to this form of economic fascism. Generations have rightly condemned Nazism and its policy of genocide against Jewish people, gypsies, socialists and others. Commentators for decades have highlighted imposed dictatorships across the world which have annihilated opponents in their hundreds or thousands and in some cases millions and yet people in this country, north and south, have fallen over themselves to welcome the G8 leaders to these shores despite their participation in illegal wars across the globe and their support for an economic system which imposes austerity measures on workers,

cuts welfare payments to the most vulnerable, stops or restricts educational assistants to children with special needs in both jurisdictions and imposes bailout repayment requirements on ordinary citizens while bankers from Anglo Irish are recorded having a laugh about it. The very people who caused this mess remain untouchable. Business and corporations continue to pay too little tax or avoid paying tax with no consequences whatsoever. In contrast in the last twelve months in the Republic of Ireland 272 people were jailed for being unable to afford to pay their TV licence. As a nation we can continue to offer our caps to the G8 leaders while youth unemployment across Ireland ranges from between 20 and 25 per cent and as Máirtín referred to earlier, in Greece and Spain it is closer to 50 per cent. In some disadvantaged communities unemployment levels have reached as high as 80 per cent. Energy prices continue to rise, the profits for energy companies has hit record levels. Most damning of all however is a decision by those who presided over this global economic system could do nothing about the unequal distribution of wealth across this world. 60,000 people died of hunger yesterday, 60,000 people will die today and will die tomorrow and the day after. Their hunger imposed upon them by the G8 leaders and their refusal to deal with economic inequalities – that is 22 million deaths this year and every year – that's genocide, that should be the definition of a deterrent in anybody's dictionary.

So, comrades, what we don't need is cheap labour enterprise zones, worsening labour conditions, a tax on elderly people in nursing homes and a tax on health care provision, or reduced benefit payments for unemployed people and people with disabilities. We don't need lower corporation tax for the North which would then actually create in the words of Dr Conor McCabe; 'an on-shore tax haven'. What we do need is a strong labour movement and a strong trade union movement which works hard to unite all members in each of its unions and works alongside our brothers and sisters in other unions to provide a real alternative to this anti-worker and anti-people onslaught.

I would encourage every delegate here to get involved in your local Trades Council across Ireland – there are about thirty Trades Councils. The Trades Councils are active in the local community and are an important arm of the trade union movement. Comrades, when we get off our knees and we speak with one voice we can provide leadership and we will be able to demonstrate that another world is indeed possible. As James Connolly succinctly put it 'our demands must not end there, we only want the earth'. Comrades, you are very welcome to Belfast, go raibh maith agat go leir. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Paddy for that address which I think timely reminds us of the purpose of our deliberations here today.

Now, I suppose that the formal openings are over, can I just make a point that this Conference is your Conference delegates and you should take the opportunity to ensure that you own the Conference by speaking at every opportunity you need to speak at and of course with due respect. Can I thank both our speakers on your behalf for coming in and delivering their addresses to us.

And, now we can move on to the business. Election of Tellers, I have five propositions for Tellers – Matt Staunton, IMPACT, Des Fagan, CPSU, Kevin McCabe, NIPSA, Maura McKenna, UNISON and Seamus Searson, NASUWT. Can those be agreed? Thank you Conference.

And, I have six for Scrutineers – Eamonn Lawless, SIPTU, John Kelleher, AHCPs, Kate Farrelly, IBOA, Billy Hannigan, PSEU, Paddy Kavanagh, TEEU and Liam Gallagher, UNITE. Can those be agreed? Agreed. Thank you.

Can I call on Jack McGinley, Chairperson of Standing Order Committee to address Conference.

Jack McGinley, Chairperson of Standing Orders Committee

Delegates, the first Report of Standing Orders is in the Agenda booklet on pages 42-44. I am not going to read the whole document but I will avert to some of the more pressing issues. The times of assembly are there – Tuesday and Wednesday 9.30am to 5 O'Clock, Thursday 9.30am to 4pm unless the business is concluded earlier. In relation to the elections, Standing Orders Committee note that Congress has received nominations for the Officer positions as follows: one nomination for the position of President - John Douglas is therefore deemed elected. Two nominations have been received for the position of two Vice-Presidents - Patricia King and Brian Campfield are both therefore deemed elected. One nomination has been received for the position of Treasurer – Joe O'Flynn is therefore deemed to be re-elected. The Standing Orders has received thirty-two nominations for election as ordinary members of the Congress Executive Council – there are thirty seats to be filled. The election of the ordinary members of the Executive Council will be conducted using the single transferable vote system. The Congress Constitution requires that the election must result in the election of at least eight women. In the event that the outcome of the election of the thirty ordinary members of the Executive results in less than eight women being elected then the following procedure shall apply. The last man to be elected among the thirty should be replaced by the last woman to be eliminated. In the event that this does not result in eight women being elected, then the second last man to be elected should be replaced by the second last woman to be eliminated and so on until the minimum requirement of eight women members is met.

Standing Orders 2.3 – the Standing Orders Committee notes that Congress has received two nominations for the position for the Congress Executive Council reserved for a person to represent Trades Councils. Since this was published, we have been informed that one of the candidates Eric Fleming has withdrawn. I therefore deem Colm Cronin to be deemed to be elected.

Standing Orders has received five nominations for Congress Standing Orders Committee – John Gaffney, Pat Guildfoyle, Cora Martin, Jack McGinley and Aidan Kenny. Those five are deemed to be elected and two substitute positions will be filled by the incoming Executive Council.

Standing Orders has received two nominations for Congress Appeals Board and therefore John Dawson and Arthur Hall are deemed to be elected.

The procedure for the distribution of ballot papers is set out here as are procedures for motions and amendments and a suspension of Standing Orders and for the Conference sessions.

Finally, in relation to Standing Orders Report No. 1, on the distribution of materials at Biennial Delegate Conference, affiliates and delegates are reminded of the requirement to seek the permission of Standing Orders in advance of the distribution of any materials to delegates during the course of the BDC. Particular attention is drawn to prohibition of the Conference venue of the display of banners, posters etc. I move.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you. Ok, any speakers to Standing Orders Report? Ok, can we adopt Standing Orders Report? Agree – thank you. Thank you John and Jack. Report No. 2 please.

Jack McGinley, Chairperson of Standing Orders Committee

Standing Orders Report No 2 at 1.1, please note that the address by Grahame Smith, General Secretary of the Scottish Trade Union Confederation will now take place on Wednesday morning, 3rd July and not on Thursday morning, 4th July as advised in the printed agenda.

In relation to display stands – a list of exhibitors has been approved by the Standing Orders Committee and has been provided to delegations. Cornmarket is providing a free health screening service for delegates attending Conference. Delegates who wish to avail of this service should complete a card which is attached to the report and return the card to the Cornmarket Stand in the exhibition area where an appointment will be arranged.

3.2 - Congress is organising a further fringe meeting which will take place on Thursday morning, 4th July at 8.30am in the Board Room of the Conference Centre. The meeting will be address by Prof. Keith Ewing on the topic of what needs to be done to bring Ireland into line with rulings of the European Court of Human Rights and with the ILO Convention on Freedom of Association, the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining. The meeting will be chaired by incoming Congress President, John Douglas.

4 – Appeal by the Teachers' Union of Ireland of Appeals Board Recommendation No. 13/01 McGrath, Holland & Ryan and the TUI. On the 13th May, Congress was notified by the TUI that it wished to appeal a recommendation of the Appeals Board 13/01, McGrath, Holland & Ryan and the TUI. On the 14th June, Congress was notified by McGrath, Holland & Ryan that they would like the recommendation of the Appeals Board to be reviewed. The Standing Orders Committee notes that the provision of Paragraph 48 (b) (viii) of the Congress Constitution provides that if members were a party to an Appeals Board Recommendation and not willing to accept the recommendation they may seek a review of the case by an Ombudsman appointed by the Executive Council. Standing Orders Committee understands that McGrath, Holland & Ryan have been informed of the provision of the Constitution relating to a review of an Appeals Board Recommendation. Having considered the circumstances, the Standing Orders Committee is requesting the TUI to defer its appeal pending the outcome of the review of the Ombudsman. The Standing Orders Committee is recommending that the TUI would be given time to respond to this request during Conference. In order to facilitate this delegates are advised of the following changes to the agenda:

Motion 8 on Older People standing in the name of the Executive Council will now be taken during the morning session of Conference on 2nd July and the guest speaker on behalf of the Retired Workers' Committee will also be invited to speak during this session. The speaker from the Congress Youth Committee will now speak during the morning session of Thursday 4th July and not during private session as on the printed agenda. Following the conclusion of the debate on the Commission on Trade Unions scheduled for the afternoon session of the Conference of the 2nd July, the TUI will be given time to respond to the request made by the Standing Orders Committee to defer the appeal.

Finally, Chair, Conference has been asked to facilitate one of our sponsors – Visit Belfast – and they would like permission to conduct a survey face to face during designated break periods and Standing Orders are agreeable to facilitate this from tomorrow on. I move.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Ok Jack, thanks. Any speakers to the second Standing Orders Report? None ok. Are we agreed? Agreed.

John Douglas, Vice President of Congress

Ok delegates, I would like to call on the President, Mr Eugene McGlone to address Conference please.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

It is not really in two volumes you will be pleased to know, thanks John.

Conference, two years ago when we met in Killarney we were of the expectation that the economic situation in Ireland was only going to become more demanding, we did of course have the hope that things would not be as bad as we had anticipated. However, the experience of the last few years has taught us that very rarely does hope ever succeed over real expectation. It is a fact for the working people of this island, the people we represent, our class: things have only got worse. There is, as we will hear during the course of our Conference, a whole horrifying catalogue of the damage that austerity is heaping upon our people.

And faced with what can at times seem like an almost insufferable burden, I suppose there is a temptation to do one of two things: to come to this rostrum and bemoan our lot, wring hands and say it shouldn't be like this. Of course it shouldn't be like this but there is absolutely no point bemoaning the reality of where we currently are, or, secondly to be constantly looking over our shoulders at history, seeking inspiration and pointers of where we should be politically to help move us out of the present difficulties.

Conference we are not now, neither should we ever be in the position of either whistling while passing the graveyard of our economic past, or hiding under the blankets until the sun rises. Our task is to find a way out of this, this current nightmare that poses as our reality, the nightmare of increasing unemployment, the real horror of mortgage foreclosures, the attacks upon child benefit, the uncertainty in terms of welfare rights on both sides of the border and the almost Malthusian solution, the exportation of our young and most gifted to further enhance some other countries and their economies.

Delegates our role should not be to merely dwell on these things but to recognise them for what they are, which is the imposition of an alien, uncaring culture of greed designed to reduce us the workers into mere tools for production, and disposable tools at that. We know who our economic enemies are, we know full well what it is they seek to achieve. Their ambitions have not altered in the course of the past century. As Larkin remarked almost 100 years ago at the Congress of 1914, and you'll find the extract in the report:

“... Looking back over the immediate past- we saw there an attempt of an organised, unscrupulous capitalist class composed of men of different political parties and holding different sectarian views who had combined together for the purpose of destroying organised labour in Ireland...”

Conference, every time we as an organised labour force make any advances in the pursuit of lifting the conditions of labour we are immediately attacked by the reactionary capitalist class, even when there is a recognised and agreed imperative on a European wide scale, such as we saw recently, with the agency workers directive. The first tendency of the Governments, in both jurisdictions was to minimise the impact on the employers. Employers, we are fed up being told can only be competitive if workers will work for less and with less job security. And let's also take stock of other recent developments designed to be helpful to employers. The recent attack on the few remaining wages and conditions regulatory bodies; of course that will help employers, help them reduce wages, but it won't make them competitive. But it

will certainly have an impact on the quality of work, which in some instances will be downright dangerous.

And sure while we are at it why not just further reduce the minimal protections for those still at work to make sure that there is little or no protection against unfair treatment. Let me make it quite clear from this rostrum that we will not roll over to have our stomachs scratched.

Congress while we must all be constantly aware of these attacks we must not allow them to overpower us; we, you, all of us in this room, are the inheritors for the current generation of the leadership of the movement, our movement, the Labour movement. Each and everyone in this hall is a trade union leader, each and every one of you is looked up to by the membership we here represent, that is over $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million working men and women and their families and their dependents, that's not a small social movement that is the largest social movement on this island and it is our responsibility to ensure that the needs of those $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million are properly heard and listened to. We carry their hopes and aspirations; it is a not insignificant challenge. But I believe that we are able and willing to shoulder that responsibility.

Can I also add and say as strongly as I am able to say that there is absolutely nothing to be gained by any of us if we enter into some kind of public therapy session from this rostrum, nothing to be gained by saying that we can do nothing and particularly nothing will be gained if we try to do nothing, that's not why we are here. We are here to create a climate for change.

Let me share with you that I remember as a newly appointed trade union official, a comrade of mine who's now dead, a man called Howard Burns, some of you may well have known him, came to my office in Transport House, Belfast and said that he had one simple piece of advice for me and this is it, whenever someone raps your door you are their last hope, they see you, he said, as their chance of getting some justice for their cause, well dare you let them down: and I am telling you exactly the same thing.

We have a responsibility and it is not for us to pass that responsibility onto someone else or pretend not to see it, it is for us to stand up and take that responsibility by the scuff of the neck and drag it where we need to drag it to on behalf of our class.

And while I'm reminiscing let me say that we are currently in the middle of the celebration of a number of centenaries. In the last year we saw the centenary of the formation of the UVF and also the Irish Labour Party, or to give its original title the Irish Trades Union Congress and Labour Party, and a few weeks ago it was the centenary of the death of Emily Davison, interestingly enough there is a connection between the suffragettes and the UVF, it was suffragettes in Belfast who carried out an arson attack on Abbeylands, the home of Sir Hugh McCalmont, which was being used as a UVF training centre, as an act of protest. I mention Emily because women are largely ignored when history is being written, including our own history. And if not ignored then reduced in significance.

Let me give you an example; at the top of O'Connell Street, in the other capital, there is fittingly enough, a monument to the memory of Charles Stewart Parnell, it bears the inscription you will all be familiar with which talks about no man having the right to put a limit on the march of a nation. In the premises, which now house a bank just across the road from this monument, there is a plaque and it is engraved to the memory of the "Irish Ladies Land League".

The Irish Ladies Land League which met on those premises carried on the dangerous work of the Land League when its male leadership, including Parnell, was either in jail or in hiding, the

Ladies Land League was led by Parnell's sister Anna, who was 28 years of age when she willingly took up the dangerous task of running the Ladies Land League and who remained engaged in political agitation all of her life. She gets a plaque he gets a monument.

Interestingly enough her brother was opposed the Ladies Land League, he felt that it left the men involved in the land league open to ridicule, and in 1882 he effectively disbanded it. Michael Davitt on the other hand held a different and more radical view he declared that:

“... No better allies than women could be found for such a task. They are in certain emergencies, more dangerous to despotism than men...”

We are, as I have said, in the midst of a series of centenaries of great social upheaval and change, single events which we tend to view as landmarks in the progress of history, notwithstanding that history is an ever evolving series of events made real ordinary people such as we are.

Our movement has a long and proud history it didn't begin with the extension of new Unionism to the island of Ireland in 1907 when Larkin first landed in Belfast or indeed the linen workers dispute led by Mary Galway which preceded Larkin's arrival in Belfast by a year, in 1906; they were the symptoms of radical change; the organising of the unorganised largely ignored men and women.

This surge for organising caused great upheavals to the established order from Belfast through Newry to Cork, Wexford and ultimately Dublin in late August 1913.

August 1913 was the hiatus of a 6-year continuum, which arguably continued on and is still evolving today. So, we must resist the temptation to think about this as a single historical event, even if it did last several months but think of it rather as a turning point in the development of our class consciousness.

The events of the autumn 1913 and spring of 1914 were in one sense, as Padraig Yeates pointed out last week at my own union's Conference, an industrial defeat. However it was greater victory than it was a defeat, because it created a fuller understanding of the need to organise. This is evidenced by the fact that workers, within three years after the Lockout joined or re-joined Unions in their thousands.

In terms of trade union membership density at the time of the lockout 1913 Ireland was poorly organised. In 1913 the total affiliated membership to the ITUC was 100,000. And the ranks of the ITGWU were decimated by the success of the employer's federation, proving the old adage that finance, is indeed the sinews of war.

But the unions did recover and within 5 years the ITGWU's membership was 43000 exceeding the 1913 figure of 30000 (Organising History, Francis Devine p1004), making real the worst fears of William Martin Murphy, that while he may temporarily defeat Larkin he couldn't defeat the idea of Larkinism.

And comrades despite as Larkin pointed out that the employers had combined with the sole purpose of destroying organised labour in Ireland; we are still here today, numerically stronger than we were 100 years ago: and even though we are in the midst of a vicious and sustained assault on us by the combined forces of business and careless Governments, we still have the ability to defend and make progress on behalf of our class.

If the organised members of trades unions could do what they did in 1913, suffer as they did with so small a unionised workforce what should we be able to do today. You see, I think Conference that this is a very simple thing, I am not a trade unionist or an official of a union to bolster up any political party or any narrow political philosophy, I engaged in a process to help, hopefully, to lift the people I think I represent, my class, even if it's just slightly, slightly enough so that they too can not only look at the stars but can have the opportunity to understand exactly what they are.

When Larkin left Belfast and Newry and Cork and Wexford and Dublin he left behind something that hasn't changed, that is, the demand of our class for proper political and industrial participation.

And, in part that gave expression to the development of the Labour Party in Ireland. Now, you must bear in mind that when the Labour Party was formed (last year was its centenary), the whole of the island of Ireland was still part of the united Kingdom, it was an Irish Labour Party for Irish workers; it was designed to be a political expression of the trade union movement, it was to be our political wing.

To ensure that we weren't fighting with one hand tied behind our back. And it leaves me to question why it is that the vehicle for social change, that vehicle of our political expression to assist us, to unfetter us, hasn't served its purpose? You will be pleased to hear that I don't intend to examine the impact of the 1918 election or the 1914-16 war or the Easter rising.

I want to tell you that I don't have a party political agenda, I believe myself to be a socialist I don't belong to any political party, I never have done. And I don't believe that we get the politicians we deserve, well not all the time.

I was listening to members of my own union at our conference last week genuinely question why the party they have loyally belonged to has cast them adrift. It not pleasant to hear good comrades, ordinary decent working people look at the party of labour and see no difference between it and Fine Gael.

Now I understand that there are those, in this movement, some in this room who hold the view, and I don't deny them their entitlement to do so, that the Labour Party has over the past 2 years softened the bark of Fine Gael, things they believe would have been a lot worse if Labour had not been in coalition. Well has it, could it - I do not think so. 100 years after the Lockout an 2 years of this current coalition Labour has been involved in them before, there is still no right to trade-union recognition, no right to collective bargaining, although this has been promised in the current "Programme for Government".

I do sincerely hope that when An Tánaiste addresses us tomorrow that he will announce the legislation we have been waiting for, for over a century. I also hope that if he does it's not some Fine Gael proofed measure designed to alleviate the fears of the party of business. If he does produce something worthwhile then it might be the beginning of a new partnership between the complimentary arms of the labour movement in Ireland. That is to be welcomed and embraced.

Let me add that there is nothing for any Labour politician to be ashamed of for listening closely to the voice of organised workers, particularly when establishing a framework for Government. But that has not been happening.

Let me remind you that over the past 2 years and on each of the successive budget occasions Congress on your behalf has produced pre-budget submissions, professionally produced and

backed-up with detailed evidence, offering alternatives to the relentless austerity measures oppressing our class, these are ignored. And that is another cause of the resentment towards Labour for its role in Government.

Added to that there seems to be a habit forming that when Governments don't like the outcome of political consultations they ignore them, as was the case with recent referendums, the attitude seems to be well we just run it again until we get the right answer. Lisbon 2 by the way promised the enactment whole social chapter, including workers' rights, what ever happened to that promise?

In similar vein during the build up to the vote on Croke Park 2, the Governments position was to threaten workers that if there was no agreement they would enforce pay and condition cuts by way of legislation. That is intolerable and not what trade unionists and Labour voters wanted to hear.

And when the Unions rejected the proposals by a large majority Government immediately set about undermining the collectivism of the unions involved, attempting to pick us off one at a time, seeking to create divisions, which we must not allow to happen, if we intend retaining any semblance of being a trade union movement. Action designed to undermine our very purpose; a very "Thatcherite" solution.

I am not offering a view on the elephant in the room, whether or not Haddington Road agreement is a good or bad deal, there are different views in this room on that matter and they are all equally valid.

But I will offer a view that I hope is supported by everyone in this room irrespective of your view on the agreement itself. And that is that no Government should have the power or authority to be able to legislate away our terms and conditions of employment. That is very dangerous and we are obliged to collectively oppose it.

I say this for obvious reasons firstly, we are examining the 1913 lockout and seeking to learn lessons from it, the first of which should be that solidarity works for our benefit, yet solidarity is the primary focus of the attack by way the matter was approached and the main weapon of division was creating more fear. Secondly that it was a Labour minister who fronted up the undisguised attack on workers who had the effrontery to say no. I wonder why they the Government became so bold to do this. Particularly when the people who caused the financial crisis in the first place can be heard joking and laughing about their antics on you-tube and not from the comfort of a prison cell.

Perhaps these questions, that I have no doubt that our General Secretary will pose on our behalf, will be answered by An Tánaiste after he addresses us tomorrow.

I would add that I am pleased that Eamonn Gilmore is attending our conference, – he's not dodging us. Enda Kenny won't be joining us, perhaps we are not high enough on list of priorities, but he will be in good absentee company because neither will Peter Robinson be taking up his invitation once again, to address us. Maybe if Barack Obama turned up to patronise us they would be first in the queue.

Conference, all is not doom and gloom so let me remind you of some of our recent successes.

Firstly as you will see from your report individual unions are taking initiatives to use our economic power to help their members. Following on from the relative success of the Fair Hotels Campaign MANDATE has now established a Fair Shops initiative. We are beginning to

see a sort of “Union Made” badge; because it’s only a short step from retail to manufacturing. Supporting workplaces that, despite the arguments we have over the years, still provide a level of decency in employment terms.

We are also as a collective, under the “Commission”, which I will come to later, actively looking at where we source our materials can we better deploy our purchasing power, dealing only with unionised employments.

My own union UNITE, supported by SIPTU won a significant decision for the ex- Waterford Crystal workers at the European Court of Justice in relation to the non-payment and non-protection of pensions. It is alarming that in 2013 we needed to resort to European Court to force a Government in Ireland to honour its obligations, obligations that have been well-known for almost 20 years and delay and avoidance of the only adding further hardship on already repressed workers.

And, in terms of organisation we as a Congress are still making headway, recently unions have reported signing new recognition agreements, including companies in the Quinn Group: an event that would have been unheard of just a few short years ago is now a reality. How much better would this be if the promised legislation had been enacted?

And collectively over the period of the last few years we have managed to make the Nevin Economic Research Institute a reality. An initiative which has not only enhanced the quality of our ability to make arguments on an economic stage but has enhanced the standing of Congress in broader terms; simply because we can now stand up our arguments and our understanding of a better economic model based upon the ability of some of the best thinkers in economics in Ireland today working within the Institute.

We are however, despite these gains still under attack; we are under attack from every side in an industrial sense. The United Kingdom Government at Westminster is pushing through a two-pronged attack on our class, and one element of the attack is the grossly unfair cuts in the welfare budget, which are now being projected into the term of the next Government.

Cuts that are designed to further condition our people to a subsistence type of existence, sending out a message that they are of less significance, creating a permanent underclass condemned to second class citizenship, simply because they are forced to depend upon social welfare.

Now you and I both know, we all know, that social welfare and its introduction wasn’t designed for any other purpose other than to create a net, a safety net, for those less fortunate in our society but now we have a situation where people are being told effectively that social welfare and an individual’s need for it makes them less worthy than others in our society.

Imagine the horror of being told that simply because you’re in receipt of benefits that you must house a complete stranger, about who you know nothing or suffer a reduction in benefit payments which possibly means you and your children going hungry. Thankfully the Stormont Assembly are not planning to implement this measure. And let me remind you that all these attacks on welfare benefits are being done so we are told to redress the imbalance. I know loads of people on benefits none of them are living luxurious lifestyles. Government is not doing this as they claim to make work more economically worthwhile

No they do it simply to set lower standards so that wages can be driven down by unrealistic comparators and still tell us that we are better off.

It does nothing to enhance any workers position by further impoverishing those who through no fault of their own are forced to depend on welfare benefits. Nothing that the Coalition in Westminster is proposing will help the unemployed, unemployment caused by their and their predecessor Governments continuing lack of infrastructural investment. A Government which like its counterpart in Ireland is slavishly following the lunatic economic example of the Chicago school of discredited monetarist economics.

Recent research both by NERI and in GB by the Rowntree Foundation has shown that greater numbers of people at work are at increasing risk of poverty. In Ireland it's around 14%, in the UK its closer to 25%. So the process of driving down welfare benefits is having the desired knock on effect of attacking wages and the workers ability to sustain a decent standard of living. Conference, we are not fooled by these Government spokespersons we know that massive numbers of workers are dependent on benefit boosts to maintain a basic standard of living.

It is also notable and intolerable that it is also the least able to protect themselves who suffer disproportionately, mainly children and the old. In the ROI 18% of children are at risk of poverty and here in NI over 100,000 children at a similar risk. I find this to be obscene. And bear in mind that with the current welfare cuts it is women who will be disproportionately affected.

The second element of the attack is the on-going attack on worker and trade union rights. To listen to the Cameron Government and its apologist's one would think that the only thing wrong with the UK society is the fact that workers want paid. Not even well paid, just paid. They also seem to think that workers shouldn't want any time off, they shouldn't require recreation. And they should never be ill.

They most certainly shouldn't need and shouldn't have the ability to provide a better standard of living for the next generation. And unfortunately there sections of our society who have bought these lies and have given up the fight.

Now in Northern Ireland we are fortunate or maybe unfortunate that employment rights is a devolved matter but some of our ministers in NI seem to have terrible difficulty in understanding the meaning of the word devolved. Well, let me make it clear it means that yes minister you have the responsibility!

Conference while we are certainly in a situation where we are being assailed from all directions we are not diminishing. Far from it, our movement is vibrant despite the attacks which have been on-going since Thatcher a generation ago. This movement not merely survives, it still holds its head up with a degree of pride in terms of our achievements for our class, some of which I have referred to and we shouldn't forget them. But we should recognise what is in store for us if we take our eye of the ball or think we can relax.

And the attack on us in NI is exactly the same, albeit a year or 2 later than when it began in the Republic: the same type of forces, the same type of thick woolly thinking, the same type of immediacy in terms of pleasing their European political and economic masters has caused untold damage to our class.

It is now starting to show damage to the middle classes, the people who would have once thought of themselves as the real participants in society. People with a stake in society, in middle class occupations who are reasonably well paid, with middle class aspirations in terms of education, health and their children's futures are finding themselves in the same difficulties

as the rest of us. With foreclosed mortgages, which are running at a level of 5 times higher in Northern Ireland than in the Republic, with spiralling tax demands and the ever looming threat of unemployment.

It is not a bit of wonder that public sector workers took the opportunity to tell the Government what they could do with their additional cuts. That is put them in the place that John Bowe got his figures from.

But that in itself was not an end, the question still remains, where do we go from here. Undoubtedly, there is not the money in the country to do all that we would want, but there is if one is prepared to listen, a fair and better way of dealing with the situation.

And that involves sharing the burden, it's also putting the people before bond holders, it's about taxing the wealthy who have the money, as opposed to giving a platform to famous tax dodgers to have lunch with the partners of visiting heads of state. It's about ensuring that major corporations pay their fair share, it's about going so far as to suggest that the people who caused the problem should not only share the burden of solving it but should where necessary be punished for their careless and reckless approach.

But that requires and demands a political direction and while it is just over 100 years ago since the Irish Labour Party was formed we have failed to harness it as a vehicle for social change.

Imagine a situation where if we could persuade 10,000 of our members, an additional 10,000 of our members, to join the party as individual members, or affiliate more union branches in key constituencies, to commit to work for social progress through such a party. Where we could influence and develop an alternative set of policies for the party, imagine what could be achieved and then ask why we didn't do it.

Prior to the last election, at our Conference in Tralee in 2009, I recall Jack O'Connor speaking to motion 22 calling on unions to encourage their members to join the Labour Party. That was in the mouth of an election, the purpose, and he was quite right then and it remains true today, was to work as hard as we could to ensure that there was political party in office in Government leading a Government of the left, controlling a Government of the left with whom we could do business: as opposed to propping up a reactionary right wing Government.

Of course, some tried, but imagine if we had tried harder, imagine if we had done it better, imagine if there had two or three times the number of Labour and other left TDs in the Dáil. And then imagine that those Labour TDs and others on the left were representative of our views, imagine that sort of a country, imagine what sort of society we could bring about. I'm not for one moment suggesting that we could magic away the mess that Fianna Fail created, but could we, ask yourself influenced a solution that was less destructive of our society.

Conference I have been fortunate enough to have represented you at our near neighbour's conferences over the past 2 years. One of the most important aspects, of our work, over the last number of years has been the developing and cementing of arrangements and relationships with our colleagues in the Congresses outside of Ireland, that is, Scotland, Wales and of course Britain.

As I said I have had the privilege of attending and addressing both the Welsh and the Scottish TUCs, as well as engaging with them in the Council of the Isles, and perhaps more significantly I have had the opportunity of listening to the First Ministers of both of those devolved bodies, address their Conferences.

It was of course not unexpected that the Wales TUC has developed a better than working relationship with the devolved Labour administration however it did come as a welcome surprise when the First Minister for the Welsh Assembly, Carwyn Jones, stated quite clearly to their conference only a few weeks ago that there would be no privatisation of public sector jobs in Wales under his watch.

He didn't just come to the conference to tell the conference that he thought they were all doing very well and to carry on, he came genuinely seeking to cement the partnership and relationship between the two arms of the Labour movement in Wales he talked of a real partnership, he talked of how in terms of the Welsh that the trade union movement was seen an integral part of their society not just as advocates for people at work. No he sees, as do his Government, the trade union movement as an integral part of their social fabric.

I have to say that I listened with envy because it was quite clear that he wasn't just saying it he believed it. And it is the paradigm we should be seeking to build. Instead of which what do we have, where is the expression of comradeship in Ireland, north or south, where is there meaningful engagement the listening ear that doesn't mean that we are conceding, where is there meaningful consultation seeking out of our views? And I also listened to Alec Salmon at the Scottish TUC in both Inverness and Perth, and while I don't find him nearly as convincing as I found Carwyn Jones.

I did remark to the conference in Perth that he made himself available to come and speak to them, stating that he recognised the importance of the trade union movement to Scotland.

By contrast, as already mentioned neither the First Minister in NI nor the Taoiseach could attend our conference, though you would be tempted to reflect upon what if anything they could have added but it would have been nice had they both come and recognised the significant importance of the trade union organisation in Ireland and its significance to the people and workers both north and south. And if this teaches one thing it teaches us anything is that we shouldn't look for friends in hostile territory.

We can however look forward to the presence of both the Deputy First Minister from the North Martin McGuinness and An Tánaiste Eamon Gilmore to talk to us and to listen to us, and hopefully to take away our views for consideration when policy is being determined.

Legacy of 1913 – Conference, the main theme of our conference is not surprisingly the Legacy of 1913. If there is a real legacy in terms of 1913 then it must be the continual resilience, growth and development of this movement throughout the last century; despite the hardships which have been foisted upon us, and our own internal disputes and conflicts.

A growth in the movement that has been and will continue to be a victory of our class's needs, above and beyond the individual unions and personalities which make up Congress.

This was ably demonstrated when we overcame the causes of a split in the movement just over 70 years ago and came out stronger as a unified Irish Congress of Trade Unions. And we have as part of that legacy managed to reinvigorate ourselves in the intervening decades, we have occasionally been honest enough to look at the organisation that we currently have and point out to ourselves where the flaws lie, point out to ourselves where things can be improved and point out to ourselves and remind ourselves why we need to improve it.

You will see from your agenda comrades that we are currently in the midst of another re-examination of our role and purpose. Demonstrating that we are constantly evolving, that

what was established in 1894 needed to be revised and revived as the years passed to ensure that the generations that followed found the vehicle fit for purpose. I suppose with that in mind it was very fortuitous that Conference adopted a resolution 2009 calling for the establishment of a commission to re-examine our movement with a view to ensuring that is fit for purpose.

Of course, these things do take time but at our last conference in Killarney we endorsed a document entitled 'A call to action' which was the product of our internal commission aided and supported by Philip Jennings and Philip Boyer.

Later today we will be debating an enabling motion to take the deliberations of the commission one step further, that will not be the end of the process it's just the next stage in the process but for this project to be successful for us to achieve even 50% of what we believe is achievable requires the input of everyone, and doing so as the representative voice of the members in their workplaces.

This movement has always been quite rightly proud of its democratic principles. It has never been a burden for us to fully utilise our democratic processes, we can never have too much democracy.

Today you will be asked to endorse the enabling motion. But you must also consider that this movement cannot exist in isolation. If we are anything we are an integral element of our society. If we yearn for the type of position held by our colleagues in Wales then we must necessarily shoulder the responsibility it brings with it. I urge you delegates to give this enabling motion a good test run, make sure that all the issues you may well have are fully aired.

By this I mean that you must be satisfied that the actions we take now and in the future to ensure that what we create is solidly based on the twin foundation stones of solidarity and democratic principles. The movement we need must always be fully responsive to the needs of our class, a movement that welcomes diversity and is responsive in a real and practical and participative way.

If this means that we increase our efforts to make the necessary connections or re-connections with our communities then this we must do. Unions did not to support one another. Be that in workshops or in linen mills and villages or in the ports or depots or within the newer types of industry and working arrangements.

What I'm trying to say is that this movement must not become introspective. We must look beyond our own interests to those of our communities, we always have done so. Our agenda for the next 3 days and the report before you demonstrates that we do reach out. We are concerned about the plight of the Palestinian people, which Paddy spoke so elegantly about in his opening address, and their treatment at the hands of the Israeli Government; we are concerned enough to be working with and supporting the work of the Trade Union Friends of Palestine. We have aided with the Colombian Peace Process and worked with and campaigned for Justice for Colombia. These are just 2 of the examples of the work we do which is part of the legacy of 1913.

Conference, we have a big programme of work ahead of us I look forward to the next 3 days to the debates and deliberations and I hope and trust that it will be a lively conference that befits avenue and place such as this. This is a place that is designed for speaking, designed for debate and designed for thought and I hope you use it fully. And, I hope there

is enough controversy – good will controversy. And I hope we leave here an awful lot wiser for the experience. Go raibh mile maith agaibh.

John Douglas, Vice President

Thank you Eugene for that very enlightening speech. I would like to call on Mr Jack O'Connor, SIPTU to move a vote of thanks to the President on his speech. Thanks Jack.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU

President, delegates, I must confess that when I stepped from the podium in Killarney two years ago concluding my term as President of this Congress, I wondered how anyone could do a better job! And before long you had addressed all my fears. The meetings of the Congress Executive began to conclude on time with all the business finished and you demonstrated through your participatory easy but authoritative style how things can be done and I was forced to sit back then and regret the fact that your term in office had not preceded mine which would have allowed me to learn so much.

I want to take the opportunity President as well to compliment you on the determination you displayed in insisting that this conference would take place here in this historic city in the centenary of the Great Lockout. And while some of us had some reservations, not because of any antipathy towards this city, but around our concern in relation to the centenary of the Dublin Lockout, I want to say that you were entirely right and you were entirely correct, it was the right decision and we are all very glad to be here, and we are here in this city on this historic day thanks to you President.

At the outset of your speech you situated it clearly, emphatically, in the context of the challenges facing what you called 'the working people of this island, our class' and you challenged us early on in your speech with our responsibility here at this conference over the next few days at this critical time in the history of the working people of this island to develop and articulate solutions and to put in place the mechanisms by means of which we would mobilise working people and play our role in civil society to bring about the realisation of those solutions to the problems which afflict workers irrespective of where they live on this island. And in doing so President, I sat there listening to you draw on the heroic legacy that we have inherited from the men and women who stood with Larkin and with Connolly in 1907 in this city and in 1913, reminding us of the heroism not just of the women and the men who led the people but the heroism of the men and women themselves who suffered and starved and watched their children suffering and starving simply in order to assert the right to organise so that working people could have a say in the future of the history of what happens on this island. And you reminded us as well in the context of our concern as to the odds we face here at the present time of the awesome nature and the awesome character of the odds faced by the men and women and children of 1913 and you reminded us as well President that that challenge is a challenge which obliges us to address the reality, notwithstanding what you said and I say this in the most fraternal way because I am one of those who takes a slightly different view. We differ not on principles but on tactics and strategy but it is a challenge President which obliges us all to address the reality that in the last general election, in the other jurisdiction on this island, notwithstanding the collapse of the economic model which had reigned supreme for so many years, none the less more than 60 per cent of those who went out to vote voted for the parties that guaranteed the rich that they would have to contribute nothing at all and that working people would carry the entire burden of the adjustment. And, it is a challenge President which obliges us to reach beyond the criticisms of others and to step out of our sectarian comfort zones to build the capacity to ensure that we overcome that reality. I thought for a while that when you were addressing conferences there President that you weren't going to address that question because you went on then, quite correctly, to expose the real purpose of the agenda which seeks to drive down social welfare benefits

and rates in the context of the campaign to drive down wages. And then you went on correctly as well President to remind those in authority here in this jurisdiction that they do actually have the power and thus the responsibility under the devolution arrangements to address many of the issues that arise in the employment relationships that they might not wish to otherwise address. And I was glad then President that after that you came back to that crucial question of our responsibility in terms of the obligations to play our part in bringing about governance in both jurisdictions on this island based on the labour movement and the left that will address the issues of working people and shift the balance crucially in their interests for the first time since 1922.

And then you quite correctly led us in to the crucial discussion that has to take place this afternoon in relation to how we go about organising ourselves, restructuring ourselves so that we can rebuild our movement so that we can address those critical challenges. And then you concluded by taking us to look beyond these shores by reminding us that we are part of an international movement with international responsibilities to those who are oppressed and victimised and suffering in this cruel world.

I very much congratulate you President on your address and on your Presidency of the Congress over the last two years and in moving the vote of thanks, I look forward very much to the way you discharge your obligations to steer us through this crucial conference in the history of our movement. I move a vote of thanks to you President. Thank you delegates.

John Douglas, Vice President of Congress

Delegates, President, I would just like to formally second the vote of thanks for your speech. I have worked with Eugene now for a number of years and over the last few years as President. He has been an excellent President. He dealt with very difficult debates at Executive level, debates which could have been fraught with danger where he has always allowed an open and frank debate and his stewardship has been welcomed. He has also led the debate in relation to restructuring of the trade union movement which will be discussed in the afternoon and I think that those challenges that face the trade union movement after five austerity budgets, after the financial capitalists have destroyed our society, I think that debate that Eugene mentions and our political role in society is something which he has championed for the last few years. I think he has also championed for a united trade union movement both public and private, north and south. There is more that actually unites us as workers both North and South, both public and private sector workers, he has united us. So, Eugene I would like to thank you for your stewardship, you have left the trade union movement in very good order and I hope to be able to build on that in the future, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Well, you have heard it from John's mouth, I am an excellent President so I am not going to take any abuse at this rostrum!

Can we now move on to the main business. First of all I want to announce that there is a fringe meeting of NERI – Nevin Economic Research Institute – which is going to be held at 1pm in the Boardroom. There are just 75 places available so it is first come, first served. There will be some food.

David, can I call on you at this point to introduce the Executive Report.

David Begg, General Secretary of Congress

Thanks very much President and I would like to join with the other speakers in congratulating you on your own excellent address.

Colleagues, it is a privilege for me to introduce the Report of the Executive Council for the year, or for the two years. First of all I want to welcome all the fraternal guests that are with us today and our own former officials who come to join us when we get together. I won't try to name them all because anyone who knows me knows well enough that I would leave someone out, so, I just really want to extend to them a very collective and warm Congress welcome to this conference.

Colleagues, the theme of the conference this year is 'Decent Work' and that is important because it is relevant of what happened 100 years ago, the struggle, the enduring and timeless nature of the struggle actually and the conference being a centenary Conference is quite special and the report of the Executive Council tries to reflect that. You will see in different parts of it that we have tried to make the connections back and forward between our present time and the time we are commemorating. Otherwise the report is structured as has been the practice over the last few years in six sections which are related to the agenda of the conference and the motions, there is a kind of a coherence between the structure of the agenda, the motions and the structure of the chapters of the report. I hope that you will find it a good account of what happened – the President has made the point that it has been a difficult couple of years – a lot of work has been done though and hopefully we have captured it to your satisfaction within the pages of this document.

I have to also now to introduce the first debate which is the Economic Section and that part of the report was written primarily by Paul Sweeney. Paul retired just there about a month ago and I want to take the opportunity to publically thank him for the work which he did in Congress over a great number of years. For a long time he was on his own in trying to steer the economic policy of Congress and he did a fantastic job and we really miss him in the Congress headquarters.

I want to make some remarks myself though about the economic situation because I think we are at a critical juncture and because we meet only every two years, it is important for us to try and capture what is the broad view of our movement. In his remarks, the President laid emphasis on that point that the whole purpose of this conference is to confer to allow you to put forward what you think exactly are the pressures and the solutions perhaps to the current difficulties that we face. So maybe I will just start it off by reflecting first of all where we have come from over the last five years, where we seem to be at this point and time and what the possibilities are for us moving before we come back to consider the business of the trade union movement in two years' time.

I want to start by reflecting that the Great Depression of the 1930s thought the western industrial nations a crucial lesson. The crisis wasn't an irascible catastrophe. It could have been avoided and even when it began, its consequences could have been mitigated by appropriate counter measures. And, it was John Maynard Keynes who subsequently created an economic theory to justify an approach to deficit financing which would achieve that very objective. And actually these lessons were applied in the first year or so in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis. Neo-liberal ideology denied that such a crisis was really possible in the first case and for that reason it was on the back foot. The efficient market hypothesis was shaken to the core. It was hard to publically defend the logic of self-correcting markets when they are obviously not self-correcting as the advent of the crisis proved. But by the time the G20 began to meet in Toronto in 2010 this had actually all changed. Keynes and stimulus was out of the picture, Germans had come to the fore with their version of Ordo-liberalism and the idea of expansion in fiscal consolidation which basically to you and me means austerity was in, and has since proved to be a disastrous policy for Europe. The politics of debt have turned into some kind of morality play, one that seems to have shifted the blame from the banks to the State. Austerity is a kind of a penance, the virtuous pain kind after an immoral party except

that of course most of us were never invited to the party, but we are still being asked to pay the bill at the end of it all. And when we initiated our campaign for *A Better Fairer Way* to deal with the economic crisis back in 2008, we warned actually that deflationary policies would push the country into a prolonged slump which would be similar to that experienced by Japan in the 1990s and we also tried to alert people to the real risk that a whole generation of people would be forced into long-term unemployment, disconnected from the labour market and scarred for life as a result. Our analysis called for Keynesian focus on maintaining demand and we recognised the need to bring down the fiscal deficit but we wanted to do it over a longer timeframe to 2017 in fact, and we also wanted to backload the heavy lifting to give growth a chance to sort of take care of some of that heavy lifting instead of loading everything on the shoulders of the people who were less able to take it. And for us maximising domestic demand was the key to preserving jobs. But we also argued for an investment stimulus and for the German model of work-sharing to be adopted to ease the burden to ease the consequences of unemployment. And we have consistently advocated for a demand side approach in the years since believing that supply side measures – although they are important in some ways – would never be enough on their own. And what I mean is, is that activation for employment is the right thing to do but it won't amount to very much if there are no jobs to activate people to apply for.

Now, five years on we are confronted with irrefutable evidence that austerity is not working. Last week the CSO in the South reported that GDP fell by 0.6 per cent in the first quarter of the year, the third consecutive quarter in which it has fallen. Likewise personal expenditure fell by a further 3 per cent – that is on top of 26 per cent fall in domestic demand since the onset of the crisis and capital investment fell by nearly 7.5 per cent. Now austerity isn't working in the UK either as we know, and last week the offices of the National Statistics confirmed that economic output is now 3.9 per cent lower than its pre-crash peak compared to what it was previously estimated to be at only 2.6 per cent. Now, one wonders really how policymakers whether here in Dublin or in Westminster or Brussels, how they can deny the incontrovertible reality of the evidence that this is revealing after five years. But, I think actually the case against austerity is beginning to build. The ETUC's argument for a Social Compact received a very strong boost recently, actually from a German published by Ulrich Beck who is one of the great German sociologists, and he makes the point and it is perhaps an obvious one to us but less so to others, but the problem created by a purely economic analysis of the European financial crisis is that it neglects the more crucial question of European society. And in this Beck was following the great Hungarian Socialist, Karl Polanyi, who held that the idea of a self-regulating economy was an unachievable utopia as he famously put it *lassie faire* was planned. He believed that the economy was planned. He believed that the economy must always and ever be embedded in society and not the other way around. And how far Europe has drifted from Polanyi's concept of the natural order can be gauged by the existence of an unemployment rate now of over 12 per cent in Europe – 24 per cent in the case of young people and as the President pointed out, at horrendous levels in some European countries – 30 per cent actually in the Republic of Ireland. And that co-exists with a situation where corporate Europe is sitting on an un-invested cash pile of 7 trillion Euros – just sitting there doing nothing to create work and productive goods. This actually is evidence of what Keynes called 'a liquidity trap'. That evidence is being completely ignored as well. And as we have seen in recent weeks many of the same corporates not content with sitting on this huge cash pile have developed the most complex and sophisticated systems for tax avoidance.

Now, within the Eurozone the Dutch and the Austrians since last week, with the Germans, but the Dutch I want to say and the Austrians of course have been the most resolute champions of austerity. These are the people who have pushed the moral dimension of this problem. But that has begun to fray a little bit at the edges. The Dutch Labour leader Diederik Samsom

spoke about this last week and its impact in the Netherlands and he made the point and to quote him directly, he said 3 per cent is wholly for us – he was referring to the debt of GDP ratio – 3 per cent is not wholly for us, we are letting that go, end of quote. And in Austria, the collapse of a major construction company, the biggest bankruptcy of the war has forced the Austrian Government into at least a modest stimulus of the economy. Now the difficulty here is obviously that the high moral ground can be an uncomfortable place to occupy when trouble comes knocking at your own door. And the truth of course is that austerity now is no more than a mantra without meaning. The intellectual underpinning for it has been totally discredited. There was a spreadsheet claw found in one of the key documents supporting the basis for austerity produced by these two Harvard economists – Rogoff and Reinhart – they produced a paper called *Growth in a time of Debt* and they had argued that Government debt above a critical threshold of 90 per cent can become a substantial drag on the economy, ergo you can't allow debt to reach that level. Now, to be honest, that has always been at variance with the facts. The Italian public sector debt in 2002 was 105.7 per cent of GDP and no one cared about it at all, it wasn't a problem for anyone. But, by 2009 it was exactly the same and everybody saw it as a catastrophe. Now the IMF has admitted that it underestimated the multiplier effects of cuts on the real economy and what they meant there was that if you cut the real economy by 1 per cent, it was thought it was though it had a marginal effect or if you bring in austerity of 1 per cent, it had a marginal effect of the same order on the main economy. Actually there was a multiplier of up to 1.9 so for every Euro or Pound you could; you are almost doubling its effects on the real economy that employs people. They also have the gall to say that capital controls are not appropriate in maybe all circumstances but there are some circumstances in which they are. This is absolute hearsay, apostasy you might say, in the case of the people who believe in this particular system. And as we now know capital controls have been applied in Cyprus. It seems to run counter completely to the whole idea of the single currency area. But again common sense dictates we can't all be austere together and if a country's public and private sectors are paying back debt at the same time, then the only way that country can grow is by exporting more. But if everybody is trying to do the same we can only succeed if we do something really different like perhaps establish a trading relationship with the people of Mars because they are the only people who are outside the loop and as you might say, this is impossibility at the moment anyway.

So, this whole thing is informed by what is called the fallacy of composition – thinking that what is true for individual parts is actually true for the whole. Thinking and putting forward this analogy and metaphors as they very often do about the household budget that if you simply, you know you are getting so much in, you are getting so much out, you must manage that within the context of the household budget. But that doesn't work for a country. That is why Keynes wrote the general theory in the first place – that countries are different. It means basically that if you take a cut in your wages you are not able to go out for that second pint every week which means that the barman loses his job at the end of the day. This knocks right through the economy but the simple message – the pillar for us – it is so easily absorbed by people, it makes such critical sense in their own life but it doesn't actually make economic sense and we have never been able to find a proper explanation or metaphor ourselves to explain how the situation is different at the level of a country. But it also shows too – I mean that G20 meeting that I referred to in Toronto in 2010 once it had decided to reverse the Keynesian position, all by the way with the exception of President Obama who stuck to his guns but the others overturned him on this question for the rest of the world, and they came out with this notion of growth friendly fiscal consolidation – an oxymoron if ever there was one.

But things are changing I honestly believe. I mean the *Financial Times* – the most advanced I suppose liberal newspaper in the world, the paper that all businesses would refer to, said in an editorial a few weeks ago that the case for a simultaneous contraction of fiscal policy in European Member States was based on a misdiagnosis of the crisis. Even the *Financial Times*

has come to the conclusion that it is wrong but still the policymakers keep straight on looking at the tunnel vision and making no change. And, the biggest lie of all actually is to suggest that the crisis is due to excessive Government spending. In fact actually average OECD debt before the crisis was going down not up and what happened was the banks promised growth, they delivered losses, they passed the cost on to the State and the State got the blame for generating the debt and the crisis in the first place, which of course now has to be paid for by expenditure cuts. The banks may have losses but the citizens had to actually pay for them. Now, as we know, Ireland is the most egregious example of this in Europe. Before the crisis we had a net public debt of 12 per cent of GDP, now it is ten times that amount. It costs 64 billion to bail out the banks and our grandchildren – yours and mine – will spend their whole lives trying to pay off that debt. That is the reality; it is a matter of major importance. And, despite everything that has come to light over the last five years, I think people were still shocked and offended by the boorish and cynical behaviour of senior managers of Anglo Irish Bank which was revealed in the tapes that were made public last week. Now at the same time I have to say another thing too – I am not sure given the trouble that this has actually caused – it is the freedom of the press to print everything – but this really has made things a hell of a lot worse for us in trying to get some relief on the sovereign debt question in Europe. But I think the justifiable anger that everybody felt should blind us to one other fact and that is that the union members in what is now the IBRC are every bit as much victims of the conduct of these people as are us the tax payer. I don't believe that it is acceptable that those people just be pitched out on the side of the road with no more than statutory redundancy just because everybody says and acknowledges the things that went wrong in that particular lot, ok, these are people too, these people have families, they are member of our movement and we have to stand by them in this movement, and I have told Michael Noonan, the Minister for Finance, in no uncertain terms on your behalf that Congress will not accept for them to be treated in that way by the State.

Colleagues, the truth about me and you I have come to realise is that absent of the facility to devalue and in the event of a macro-economic shock, the whole burden of adjustment falls on workers. There is no social institution to balance the power and independence of the ECB. Paradoxically the fact that social policy remains a national competence creates a kind of collective action problem for the Member States. The ECB drives this economic policy from the centre but there is no central constraint, no institutional balance for the ECB and unless there is a serious attempt to reform the institutional architecture of Europe well then these problems can't be ultimately be solved, because the ECB under its present remit perform in a way that has regard to the circumstances of individuals.

The President again has referred very eloquently to the Lockout in 1913 and actually it is sobering to reflect that the capitalist world, although it is much bigger now than it was at that time, was highly globalised then. Foreign direct investment in 1913 was at a level not again reached until the 1980s. And, before it collapsed into the chaos of the 1914-18 war, it could have been described as an integrated market for capital and industrial goods and to a lesser degree for service and labour as well. It was in fact not under the control of national Governments, nor indeed any international regulatory regime. It was by and large the world that Marx and Engels had described with rapid technological progress and great gains in material wealth. And yet this wealth was most fairly distributed and financial crises were frequent and all over Europe workers were forming themselves into unions to try to fight injustices. Dublin was the cockpit of inequality at that time and indeed of social deprivation. There were 385 families living in tenements in Henrietta Street in Dublin alone and over 100 of those families living one house – No. 14. And last Thursday, the Labour Lord Mayor of Dublin Oisín Quinn, officially opened a tenement in No. 14 and this is a project which is initiated by Congress as part of the 1913 Commemoration supported by the City Council of Dublin, the Heritage Council, SIPTU, IMPACT, the CWU and MANDATE. And if you can find

time to visit it over the summer, I guarantee actually you will find it a very deeply moving experience. I won't tell you why but I would suggest that you go there because I couldn't believe that the conditions could be so well replicated or expressed as in that particular museum. And it is hard today for us I think to visualise the levels of human suffering endured during the Lockout. Much beyond the rhetoric and all the rest of it, people really suffered due to deprivation and that the workers carried on as long as they did was only because of the support of the TUC and we had hoped to have with us this week Len McCluskey as the fraternal delegate of the TUC but Len I think is ill at the moment and unfortunately isn't able to come, but I would have given him a special welcome to this conference and paid a special tribute to our colleagues in the TUC for what they did for the workers of Dublin in 1913.

Now ultimately colleagues as you know, the workers were starved into submission and the union movement was rooted or appeared to be so. But it time it was able to rebuild and carry out its work. And there are important lessons for us in all of this from this labour history. One I think is to recognise that solidarity is the cement which binds us together. It is the most important ingredient in what we do. It is the most important of our value systems and the other is, is that no crisis however severe lasts forever. Indeed that loud screeching noise that is coming from Brussels in recent weeks was the sound of a bandwagon going into reverse. The Eurozone has suddenly backed up on its approach to the financial crisis. Before it was all about cutting budget deficits but Member States are being eased out a little bit and allow to overshoot the 3 per cent target. But of course they still want structural reform of the labour market – a euphuism for giving employers the right to sack workers and cut wages, nor have they made much progress in implementing a banking union. And I warn people – we need to very carefully ourselves at this prospective deal between Europe and the united States – may be a good thing, maybe not, but there is a great danger of a sort of harmonisation between the labour market of the united States and the labour market in Europe of a liberal wage clearing type of system. We need to be extremely careful of this. I do not prejudge it but we need to think about it and look at it. But still they know the game is up I think. Having virtually wrecked the European economy and created a lost generation of European citizens, they are beginning to realise that there is a tipping point. And I think this is largely what is motivating the 6 billion which is being allocated to the Youth guarantee, welcome as that is. And actually a recent report from the respected PEW Centre for Research showed that a dramatic collapse in support has happened right across every European country for the European project and this is very, very serious. This is the manifestation of Polanyi's second thesis – that all history shows that there will eventually be a counter movement by workers against economic conditions which were present. It doesn't necessarily happen spontaneously but happens over time perhaps. I mean even in America when you think about it, the New Deal came in 1935 some five years after the onset of the Great Depression but the great dilemma confronting the European elite now is that to save the European project, they must embark on the most ambitious phase of integration yet attempted in circumstances of growing public hostility to the idea. So now is the opportunity for us here in Ireland and for the ETUC and for us together actually, to press our case for an alternative approach. We will be addressed tomorrow by the General Secretary of the ETUC, Bernadette Ségol and in the last few years we have ourselves found ourselves working extremely closely with the ETUC because that is where the action actually is, not so much on the national level. And, now is the hour for us to push for social investment and the construction of institutions of the social market economy, the balance of power and the independence of the ECB. Now is the critical juncture to seek a commitment to the mutualisation to debt. Now is the time to demand nothing less, nothing less friends and I believe this absolutely essential, than the reflation of the European economy because Europe if it doesn't recognise that 26 million people is unacceptable to be unemployed as a political and social project, then Europe is nothing for the future and they will be forced to reflate the economy no matter how orthodox the thinking of the ECB or anywhere else.

Now in the last two years since our last conference, we have been challenged again, as the President has pointed out, on many fronts and in ways that we couldn't have foreseen then. But actually in one respect and I agree with him – we have achieved one very good result and I am referring to the establishment of the Nevin Economic Research Institute. The output of the Institute has greatly strengthened our capacity for economic analysis and forecasting in both Northern Ireland and in the Republic. NERI is frequently referenced in Dáil Eireann in debates and gradually it is carving out a place as a reliable source of alternative policy analysis. It was very gratifying I must say last Friday to hear it being acknowledged on Morning Ireland that Tom Healy, the Director, had been the most accurate in forecasting economic trends and I'd say it caused a number of people in Merrion Street and in the ESRI and IBEC and other places to choke on their cornflakes when they heard that piece of news. But actually the news I have for Tom is that the medium term task for NERI is even more challenging. It is no less than to formulate a plan for a new development model for the whole of Ireland – a political economy for the common good let's call it – just as in the 1950s the Swedish trade union economist, Gosta Rhen and Rudolf Meidner did in creating the Nordic Model there, which has made those countries the best in the world for economic competitiveness, for economic efficiency, for productivity, for social cohesion, social justice and equality as well. And we must take hope as well friends – I am a bit depressed about this – I see change happening. It will happen maybe quicker than we think and Gramsci once wrote; the crisis consist precisely in the fact that the old order is dying and the new cannot be born yet. That is precisely the situation we are in at the moment and the historic task of our generation is actually to be midwives to the birth of a new more socially just and sustainable economy and society, most particularly it is to identify and work for the achievement of the political and institutional conditions under which full employment can be restored. Now that would be easy for most people to do I am sure but we will probably find it a little bit challenging but I am sure we will get round to it in due course.

I hope friends that you have a good conference, that you take the President's advice and make a good contribution. I don't intend to make too many interventions myself other than what I am obliged to do but I will be listening very carefully to everything you say.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks David for that. Before I move on to the motions, can I just bring your attention to the Tellers. I announced Des Fagan from CPSU which was an error – it should be Betty Tyrrell Collard, is that agreed? Agreed. Thank you.

I now move on to Motion 1 standing in the name of SIPTU, mover, and when you are coming to the rostrum can you please announce your name and organisation. Anyone coming to speak can they position themselves in the front row please. Thank you.

Ethel Buckley, SIPTU

President, delegates, Ethel Buckley, moving Motion No. 1 on behalf of SIPTU. And delegates just before I start I want to assure you that this motion is not some remote economic or academic exercise. In fact this motion is essential to the critical task of developing and implementing a coordinated trade union response to the devastating consequences of five years of brutal one-sided austerity. The outcome of that approach is now clear for all to see. It's no longer a matter of conjecture, the experiment is being conducted and the results are manifestly evident. In levels of unemployment not seen in Europe since the 1950s, along with ongoing unrestrained recession, stubbornly perilous levels of private and public debt and growing political instability. Across much of the continent, the hopes and the aspirations of a new generation remain in ruins since the collapse of an economic model which came into ascendancy with the arrival of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Regan in the 1980s. The only

remaining attribute of the misguided supply side remedy which has so dramatically aggravated what is actually a demand side crisis, is that it exactly reflects the interests of the wealthy and the interests of those at the top of the European banking system. Neither should we underestimate the depths to which they and their political hench people would descend to shore up their positions regardless of the consequences of society. Indeed this has become graphically evident this week, in the last number of days, in the contempt displayed for the common good in those salacious Anglo Irish tapes.

The current crisis actually has a long way to go. There is no light at the end of the tunnel or on the horizon in Europe. Because the Merkel Government in Germany – which is the core instrument of the retrenchment strategy – looks set to stroll home in the elections there in September. All the indications are that the oxymoron of growth through austerity will continue for the foreseeable future. This entails a savage and an ongoing assault on the gains made by working people designed to achieve competitiveness by driving down the price of labour. The best case scenario or outcome of the current policy is one of several years of prolonged stagnation. But it could be far, far worse as the absence of growth frustrates compliance with the Fiscal Treaty ultimately precipitating a break-up of the Euro or the demise of the democratic system or both. In the unfolding conditions of the next five years, the sustainability of the democratic system in some of the stressed countries could well come down to the durability of civil society and civil society organisations' capacity to preserve the fabric of social solidarity. In that regard, as key civil society organisations which retain a degree of economic power and influence and civil society networks within countries and across our continent, the trade union movement will bear an immense burden of responsibility. Delegates, we must develop a more dynamic response than a pathetic retreat to base trade union functionalism on the one hand or routine repetition of the failed strategies of the 1930s on the other. To this end what we need is real time information, analysis and a valuation of the strategy and of the tactics of the other side as well as the response of the trade union movement as it unfolds in each country. This, we would argue, is critical to the development of a real coherent response to forging a culture of international solidarity amongst workers with the objective of developing a real democratic Europe of the people. Delegates, I urge you to support this motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress
Seconder?

David Connolly, SIPTU

Delegates, David Connolly, SIPTU National Executive seconding Motion 1. Across Europe working people are suffering the ravages of a political and economic model ideology that places the greed of a very small number of people before the common good of the majority. Workers, particularly in the so called bailout programme countries, are at the front line of this intense battle. So far the trade union movement across the continent has been unable to undertake a coordinated analyses of the changing situation as it unfolds. Neither has the movement across Europe been in a position to articulate a coherent strategic response that has connected in any meaningful way with working people or broader civil society. Sloganising about revolution is all very well but we have not yet applied ourselves collectively to the task of effectively monitoring what is actually going on, and producing quality data to educate and inform everyone active in the movement. On the other hand, it is clear that those driving the austerity agenda in Europe have their act completely together in the means of pushing a reactionary ideology and a biased analysis. What we need delegates is to build capacity across the continent to monitor the fiscal and labour market structure reform agenda as it unfolds in each Eurozone country. We need to do this to protect the interests of all European workers and to challenge this failed orthodoxy. The unit we envisage will be populated by less than half a dozen suitably skilled and qualified people. The cost when distributed across

the various affiliated organisations of the European Trade Union Confederation would be absolutely minimal and would equip us with the capacity to articulate and inform analysis and evaluation of the situation as it unfolds. Delegates, I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress
Speakers?

Brian Campfield, NIPSA

President, Brian Campfield, NIPSA to ask you to consider remitting the motion. The motion itself and the objectives are I think are absolutely fine and in line with the way in which the trade union movement in Europe should be moving forward but we all know that many unions are under significant pressures financially. I think there is a bit of ambiguity in the motion in relation to whether the authorisation of the incoming Executive to contribute to the funding of such a unit within the ETUC and to levy affiliates as appropriate on a proportionate basis is in fact, does mean that such a levy would in fact be compulsory. There is a degree of uncertainty which no doubt will be clarified by SIPTU but there is a degree of uncertainty about the funding aspect or how you finance this particular unit. And, of course as the mover of the motion did say, this isn't something remote, so what I am doing is raising the issue that when people put their hands up for a motion like this, they need to know there may well be consequences and at a later stage in the year, in six months or a year's time, if and when the Executive Committee proceed to implement it, then we will have as policy that you will be required to increase your subscriptions to Congress in order to fund this ETUC unit and I think there is sufficient ambiguity and uncertainty in the motion about that – it may well be clarified by the speakers but because of that we are asking you to remit the motion, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Is there a seconder for the remission? Formerly, ok. Ethel, do you want to come and tell us whether you accept or not.

Ethel Buckley, SIPTU

President we don't accept the remission. What we envisage is and what David Connolly who seconded the motion said, is the establishment of a unit at European level, staffed by approximately six people, sufficiently skilled and qualified to provide the entire movement across Europe with the analysis and the data in order to develop a coherent response tactic and strategy to meet the might of the other side. What we absolutely know, surely, is that the other side is organised transnationally, is organised internationally and funds very, very sophisticated think-tanks and funds many of our third level institutions across the European Union actually. In fact I would go so far as to say that the third level sector across Europe is not supplying, our side at least, working people with the analysis we need. Can I just clarify what we do envisage is a very, very small compulsory levy on unions across the European Union.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Ethel. I am very pleased Jack that you told me to read the Standing Orders very carefully – first motion from SIPTU causes a problem. We have the motion to remit, it has been seconded, and it has been rejected. We now carry on with the debate and following the debate we will take the vote on the remission. Speakers to the debate?

Noel Gibson, UNITE

President, Congress, Noel Gibson, UNITE. I didn't call for it to be remitted because I have an issue with the motion itself but the mover of the motion says that it will be minimal cost to the

unions but can we quantify it so as unions can make up their own minds whether it is affordable for those affiliated unions.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any other speakers? Ok, I am putting the motion to remit to the floor. Those in favour of remission, those against, Tellers please. Sorry, hold on Congress, with the lights it is difficult to see the top tier. Tellers can you please get in to position, is there a Teller upstairs? Could one of the Tellers make their way upstairs please. Right, those in favour of remission please show, sorry are the Tellers not in position? I am sorry to ask you to keep holding your hand up. Right, in favour remission please, the Tellers are now in position. Ok, have you got that Liam? Ok, you can put your hands down now you will be pleased to be told. Those against remission please show. Ok, remission is lost. Any other speakers to the motion? We move now to Motion No. 2 – the Economic Motion standing in the name of the Executive Council. I am sorry comrades, the votes are taken at the end of the session.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU

Sorry, President, delegates, Jack O'Connor, SIPTU moving Motion No. 2 on behalf of the Executive Council. Delegates, the misguided public policy of one sided austerity which reflects the culture and the interest so dramatically revealed in the Anglo-Irish tapes have utterly failed, inflicting misery on the peoples of Europe in the process. The irrational combination of a coordinated contraction across an entire continent accompanied by the most savage assault on citizens, particularly on working people, since the second world war is the wrong response for the wrong crises. Indeed, it could well still threaten the break-up of the Euro or even the destruction of the democratic system itself in many countries. It is now acknowledged even by the most ardent of free marketeers that this is no mere recession but a systemic crisis of capitalism itself and it is far from over, notwithstanding the relative stability of the European bond markets over the recent past which is not in any way due to any inherent improvement in the real economy. No, delegates, there is no prospect of renewal of sustained growth in the absence of a radical policy shift and such a departure will not occur until the pigeons come home to roost on the order books of German manufacturers. Meanwhile the fate of our young people, our communities, our societies remain perched on the precipice of disaster. In this jurisdiction here the strategy threatens to undermine the very stability of the peace process itself as opportunities for the young diminish, hopes are dashed and the standard of living deteriorates. It is a particularly reckless policy on the part of the UK Government which retains its own currency and the economic capacity to embark on a better course. Simultaneously, delegates, the Republic remains firmly in the grip of the Troika straightjacket – the consequences of which are clearly reflected in last Thursday's depressing statistics from the CSO. There is no disguising the truth anymore. The economy has been declining at an accelerating pace since the middle of last year and the recipe that has been applied since simply does not work. Ironically there is now only one slim prospect of achieving the 3 per cent deficit target by the end of 2015. And ironically delegates that is by immediately abandoning one sided austerity. We are faced with cutting the gap between income and expenditure by about €7.3 billion over the next two budgets – that's if the economy doesn't fall further in the interim. The plan as it stands envisages achieving this through €5 billion more in further cuts than taxes with the remaining €2 billion been generated through growing the economy by 5.5 per cent over the next two years. There isn't the remotest possibility of this happening on the basis of continuing with the present policy. The only avenue available is through dramatically ramping up the domestic economy. But actually delegates it can actually be done – it is possible – it can be done only by deploying the breathing space afforded by the Promissory Note deal to offset further cuts, accompanied by a major campaign across all departments and public institutions to lever the €6 billion which has been finally been redesigned from the National Pension Reserve Fund for strategic investment into the economy creating tens of thousands of jobs in the process. We in this movement have been calling for

this since May Day in 2011 and it is difficult to understand why it has taken so long but better late than never. And parallel with this it is equally imperative that the Fine Gael Party lifts its veto on a tax contribution from wealth and those on high incomes to generate a further €1 billion over those two budgets and sparing our people further misery. Such an approach offers the possibility and the only possibility of achieving the 3 per cent target if and only if we get a deal on the respective recapitalisation of the banks in accordance with the agreement of the European Council on the 29th June last year. This way we can buy some time while working with others in the European trade union movement and in civil society across Europe we build a massive campaign for an more enlightened policy. Delegates, I move Motion No. 2. Thank you President.

Sheila Nunan, INTO

Good morning delegates, Sheila Nunan, INTO. The confirmation colleagues last week that Ireland is back in recession was further proof that economic stagnation is strangling our economy, our society and our social services and not indeed that we needed that confirmation because the persistent trend is ample proof that austerity is self-defeating, choking growth, punishing ordinary citizens, embedding unemployment and worsening poverty and increasing inequality. But most damaging of all, colleagues, is impeding the path to recovery. As our General Secretary said we are half way through a decade of grappling with the spectacular explosion of our economy, and the ugly revelations last week of the corrupt and corrosive cabal of extortionist cast of bankers and cowboy builders was an unwelcome reminder to all of us of the gross abuse of power and position and the rapacious behaviour of the privileged classes. Too big to fail was the mantra and the little people have paid the price. But five years on colleagues we remain in economic stagnation. And ICTU has consistently challenged the politics of austerity. In the beginning the view of Congress was that austerity wouldn't work was contested but now we are gathering unlikely cheerleaders in recent times as the impact of failed policies are forcing some institutional rethink. But we have to convince the wider population and we have to press home the point because hard choices still have to be made but at least, colleagues, there are choices – they are not negligible, they are there for us in the short term and the long term and we have to do more than deliver the message through Congress. We have to campaign on it. We are organised to do that. We have to sell the message - because it's the right message - to our own members and to the wider community. In the short term Budget 2014 is approaching and Minister Noonan has already confirmed it will be tough but the real question is who will bear the burden, how will it impact on our members, how will it impact on the communities we live in and how will it impact on the social services they depend on, how proportionate they will be. Choices will be around how the deficit reduction policies will manifest. Will they promote growth? Our own economic institute tells us that cuts in public spending are less effective than increases in taxation. Taxation has to be there, it has to be in transfer paid to the top earners, effective rates have to be increased in a progressive way. We have to remove the tax transfers that favour the wealthy, ensure effective corporation tax and ensure a financial transaction tax. But in the long term colleagues, we are all unanimous here in the view that any prospect of recovery in the medium to long term lies in addressing the structural unemployment now and into the future. Passing through our education and training system every year are over 1 million young people. Ireland boasts a significant participation of its pupils and adults in the education system. Over 50,000 of these will enter the labour market every year. Across Europe 26 per cent of under 25's are unemployed. In Ireland the increase in young people not in education, training or employment has risen dramatically from 11 per cent in recent years and it should galvanise us in demanding urgent investment in education and training, job investment and key infrastructure project such as early childhood. Colleagues, we have a message and we haven't strayed from it. We have the evidence. We have it communicated. We have the ability to organise. We have capacity to influence. We have been up against huge force of power and influence – overt and covert – and they have thrown everything at

us. We are weary but we are not beaten. We will continue to fight for a better, fairer way because it is the only just way. We have hope – we had despair in Killarney – today lets galvanise ourselves, move on, support the motion, thanks.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Speakers?

Carmel Gates, NIPSA

Sisters, brothers and comrades, Carmel Gates from NIPSA speaking in favour of the motion. The message is right – we commend the work of the Nevin Institute here and I think the work Tom Healy has done has been excellent and overdue and what he has done is told the truth that other economists don't tell because it doesn't suit their economic philosophy to tell. And I think that we need to be using that information. The motion does point out all the ills of capitalism. It points out how Irish workers suffered but it also points out how we have potentially suffered disproportionately. As internationalists we believe we don't necessarily believe in equalisation of misery. We don't want to see our brothers and sisters in Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain suffer neither. But what we do recognise is that working class people have borne the brunt of a crisis they didn't create. What we want to see is more misery visited upon those who have created the system, the economists who are stockpiling the £7.5 trillion of money because it doesn't suit their profit motive. I think the trade union movement has been very good at pointing out the ills. What I would like to see us do is go further at pointing out what the solution must be and how we cure it. I don't believe and I don't think anyone in this room believes that you can create capitalism. You can possibly create a slightly more benevolent capitalism, you are never going to end unfairness and injustice capitalism. Even the modest hope for employment is not possible under capitalism. So I think that we have to kind of grab things by the horns and look at things for what they are. Reforms are not going to be enough and I think the trade union movement now needs to take that step further and argue for what we should and what we deserve and what workers deserve. The motion points to the fact that debts were socialised and then we handed the banks back over to the people who were running them. I say to you now that the trade union movement needs to point out that we need to socialise the wealth, not just for a little while, not just fix it and then hand it back but to keep it and have it run by society. Have it run by workers who run the industry, have it run by the community the industry serves and have it run by our elected politicians. Keep it out of the hands of capitalists. Imagine if industry, pharmaceutical companies, banks, the energy companies were run by us as well as for us. And, I think that's the movement I think we need to be putting back in. Just give them hope for a vision – something more than just benevolent capitalism – let workers run society. I have enjoyed the speeches so far I have to say from Paddy Mackell and Eugene McGlone – I think they have been tremendous speeches. I think it is great to hear them but I think people outside this room need to hear them. People need to hear the trade union movement for the socialising of the economy. Put an end to the wealth in the hands of the elite and let us take back what we own and what we produce.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any other speakers to Motion 2? Ok. Then I call upon Jimmy Kelly to move Motion 3. And Jimmy can you indicate whether you accept the amendment or not.

Jimmy Kelly, UNITE

I sure will President as I try and read it, not a problem. Conference, delegates, good morning and can I just add my words to our Lord Mayor, Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, that it is fantastic that our conference is actually here in Belfast. It is a lift to the affiliated unions here, it is a lift to communities to know that these issues are being debated and even though a lot of the stuff in the debate is repetitive, it matters to people right across the communities here in Belfast and across Northern Ireland, especially young, unemployed people who feel abandoned, who feel

powerless, who feel that there is no stake in society for them and who get attracted then in different directions because of that feeling of hopelessness. So, it absolutely matters what we are saying in this debate on the economy. And just to clarify President, the motion is seeking to embrace what unites our affiliates – it is not to impose any particular policy on either jurisdiction, what affiliates see as appropriate in either jurisdiction is absolutely what's appropriate.

The economies, Conference, of the Republic and Northern Ireland are mired in recession and stagnation. Unemployment is at a 15 year high. The small rise in employment is made up wholly of low and precarious work. Real wages and living standards are falling while one in five suffer in poverty and that is real poverty. Sometimes it is being put across that we are exaggerating this. It is not like parts of Africa where you see babies in the street starving, all the effects of a famine. There is real poverty behind the closed doors in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. Proud families struggle with their income either on social welfare or in employment. Trying to struggle with medical bills, trying to struggle with mortgages, trying to struggle with the children's education – all real struggles and poverty going on. The Cameron Government is proposing more cuts which will further add suffering to low income groups, both in and outside work. In the Republic the economy has returned to recession – despite Government denials – we know it has been in recession for over a year and the official figures confirm that recently. Employment in the market economy is still falling while deprivation is on the rise. One in four suffer from deprivation – half of whom are in work. Like in the North, real wages and standards are falling in the Republic. A Government that has slashed investment, cut social protection, layered tax after tax on low to average income groups, indifferent to what they are doing to the economy, what they are doing to society and what they are doing to ordinary working people.

Unfortunately, the trade union movement has called it absolutely right. We told both Governments that if they pursued austerity policies, they would end up with high unemployment. High debt stagnation – it gives no one any pleasure to be proven right and David and Eugene have touched on this throughout their speeches and right throughout the past two years since our last conference. Austerity was always going to fail. It has never worked, it has no credibility in either theory or in action. But then austerity has little to do with economic policy. It is a political policy. It is a weapon that is used. It is about transferring wealth from labour to capital, from workers to employers and from the poor to the wealthy. And austerity is good for some – it is good for those at the top and we see figures – you know statistics quarter on quarter – how those at the top are increasing their wealth quarter on quarter. We have seen in the masses transfers from the people in Ireland to the banking sectors, from Government policies that cut wages in the public and private sector while promoting ever higher profit levels. We need a popular programme for recovery. A programme that can win over a new social majority. A programme that reflects the nonsensical notion that there is no alternative and that's really the task of people at the top in business and in Government. Trying to get people to buy into that there is no alternative, feeling hopeless, the good news is that there is an alternative, and we can show how our policies can get our economies back on the road to employment. Three quick key principles delegates – first we need a sustained substantial investment throughout Ireland in our infrastructure, in our public services, domestic businesses and most of all people. We have seen all of our members in the public sector being targeted, being talked about as if they are the problem. You know you sort out the public sector we all live happily ever after and sorting out the public sector is cutting wages and cutting jobs. We absolutely reject that. We need to invest in people's education and skills but we must ensure that people will have a job to enter. So the resources for this, and earlier speakers have referred to it, we need to demand those resources. We have got to fight for those resources. It is not just about analysing and strategising. When Governments behave like they are against our people in Northern Ireland

and in the Republic we have got to back up our analysis. We have got to back it up with a fight back, with industrial action and with our mass occupations, marches on the streets, all of the action we can take as a movement while we strengthen our movement. Thanks delegates.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Jimmy, can I take it that you are accepting the amendment? Yes, ok, thank you.

Liam Gallagher, UNITE

Conference, delegates, Eugene in his excellent speech this morning – by the way he told me to say that – made reference to the fact that we shouldn't continue to bemoan our situation. We all know the situation we are in. Basically they try and proffer solutions. Motion 3 does that. Our solutions are quite simple and they have been there for a long, long time. And, our first message is quite clear. The first solution is – austerity has proven not to be working. Most informed economists accept that now as a principle. The accusation levelled against us is that we are deficit deniers, that we offer no solutions. If you look at the situation we are now in, particularly in the North and in relation to the North and Britain finds themselves in, public borrowing has not reduced in almost three years of very stringent public cuts and stringent austerity measures. All it has done is quite simply pick disposable income out of the economy and it has completely destroyed the man. That's the reality. So, what is our solution? Quite simple, Motion 3 says it, a massive public investment North and South, investment in our roads, our rails, our schools and our infrastructure. An old Keynesian argument, and Osbourne has actually said that by 2015 we have to take a further 12 billion pounds out of the economy. That solution is not going to work. I would urge you to look at this. Another thing that is vitally important I think, Labour has committed to it if they are re-elected, and that is to give every youngster from 18 to 24 who is unemployed two years guaranteed employment. Now that is a solution and that is the type of solution that we need. I would urge you to support this motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Speakers? Sorry, hold on, Eoin, Barney Long is speaking first.

Barney Long, PCS

Delegates, Barney Long, PCS. Congress, the amendment highlights the continued attack in the cuts to the welfare system and in particular the recent sanctions in changes for jobseekers allowance and employment support allowance claimants. The proposed benefit caps – and these are all before the CSR announced last week by the Chancellor, will heap further misery on the vulnerable in our society. Last Wednesday he announced a further rolling wealth for capital for four years, more hoops for JSA claimants. Single parents will have to start attending job centres when their child reaches three. Welfare spending to be further capped on top of the 18 billion cuts. A further 4 billion cut will include making unemployed people wait for seven days before they can receive benefits compared to three days at present. People will now only get benefits if they turn up with a CV and register to start looking for work immediately. Around a hundred thousand claimants who cannot speak English will have their benefits slashed unless they attend a Government sponsored language course. Congress, I think we all agree that these attacks are pernicious and they are the Government's attempts to scapegoat and demonise the poor, the sick and the unemployed. More and more people are being driven into poverty and this has resulted in more physical and verbal assaults on PCS members who administer these schemes on behalf of the Government. Congress, can I make it clear that PCS is not only opposed to these cuts but we have launched an alternative strategy on welfare and have promoted this strategy in our communities through ICTU and building links with our sister union, NIPSA, and wider community groups and women's organisations. PCS believes a fully funded public run welfare system is essential for a civilised society and is also affordable. We recognise the further threats to privatisation that stems

from the Welfare Reform Act and we have been applying pressure to MLAs not to support this when it comes before the Assembly again in September. Too many politicians have no idea just how tough life is for many. Prices are rising while wages are held back. Service cuts are biting hard. And, getting tough on so called cheats is an excuse to cut back on benefits and tax credits for those who have played by the rules. There are plans for a mass rally for when the Bill returns in September and I would urge all affiliates not only to support the protest but to continue to put pressure on MLAs to say not in our back yard. Congress, PCS members take pride in the welfare state and want a welfare system that provides a decent standard of living for the retired, the unemployed, and for those unable to work. These principles are the hallmark of civilised society. We have no wish to return to the welfare state of the 1940s. Support the amendment.

Maria Morgan, NIPSA

President, thank you. I just want to say that NIPSA affiliate endorses the wider motion but I want to speak and second the PCS amendment to this motion as a large part of our work over the past two years has been to oppose the Northern Ireland Welfare Reform Bill. The NIPSA/PCS group have worked very closely on this and we are aware that the Bill, if introduced, will not reform the welfare state, it will destroy the welfare state. 500,000 million worth of cuts will be what this Welfare Reform Bill is about so it is clear that it is not to reform anything but it is a clear set of cuts. Hundreds of jobs will be lost, or members' jobs who currently administer the benefits – that's clear. Northern Ireland will be the hardest hit after London if the Bill is implemented. It is clear it is class 4 – it is about moving people from benefit into work but there are no jobs and that is why we are opposed. A coordinated approach across the unions and community groups through the Northern Ireland Committee has allowed us to fiercely defend the social security system and to defend those who rely on it. To date we have managed to tackle the issues within the Bill and raise those at the DSP Scrutiny Committee with the MLAs. And, I have to say it has meant that the Bill has not yet reached consideration stage at the Northern Ireland Assembly. We have managed, in my view, to keep it away to this extent. This motion points out that the welfare reform agenda has set out to demonise the working class, the disabled, those misfortunate enough to find themselves unemployed as if they want to be. As if those workers in FG Wilson want to be unemployed and this sets out to demonise them. I think we need to tackle that and set them straight. We know that if these changes are imposed that more inward families will be affected than those out of work yet the right wing spin makes it about the unemployed and about the shirkers and all of that language that is so obscene that we need to continue to educate and inform our communities that it is not about worthlessness, it is about them and we need to tackle it together.

Conference we have an effective campaign across the unions and we will keep that up and continue to oppose the Northern Ireland Welfare Reform Bill and the social welfare cuts in the Republic of Ireland because the welfare state was created to help those who could not help themselves. Political decisions are being taken that result in pain and poverty and we call on the Governments, North and South, to start looking after the people who put them there and who voted for them. And if they don't then we must go after the politicians. We must say to them clearly you are not doing the job that we need you to do and we will come after you. Conference we cannot allow the destruction of the welfare state on our watch. Please support the amendment.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Can I just remind the speakers to announce who they are when they come to the rostrum. Come on ahead Eoin.

Eoin Ronayne, Civil, Public and Services Union

We are supporting the motion as amended and indeed all of the motions and that is the point I want to make and to congratulate Tom Healy and Congress on the great work that NERI is doing. Congress is on message. We were right in Killarney and we are going to be right over the next couple of days. We have the analysis now. We have leaders who have the toolkit to go out and make the argument. It is great to see trade union leaders like Dave and others on television, on radio making points that were never made as well in the past possible. But there is a great disconnect and that is the challenge for the incoming Executive – to take this toolkit, to take this information and this argument, this political reality that we know and understand because of the people we deal with and to bring it to our members. Because I have spent the last three months criss-crossing the country talking to root and branch members in my union because of the process we have to go through and I am sure the rest of you do it day in, day out. And, I know from dealing with those that there is huge despair, huge disillusionment and a disbelief that we are leading the movement. We have the information. Let's now import that information to our members so that they can become the vehicles for change that we need them to be and that they want to be. So what it is, is to give them the ability and the power to go out and to swing that 60 percent that Jack mentioned this morning. All of this is irrelevant unless we get the tools and the levers to make the change and that can only happen through political change and that can only come about by people knowing what they are talking about, believing what they are saying and delivering the goods. I ask you to support the motion.

Patricia McKeown, UNISON

President, delegates, Patricia McKeown, UNISON supporting Motion 3 and indeed the Executive Council motion. We had some concerns which I think Jimmy has just dealt with about bullet point 3 because there are some parts of our economy, some parts of our services, where there will never be room for public/private shared equity enterprises. One of them is the National Health Service. Jimmy has made it absolutely clear we are talking about separate jurisdictions here although I have my aspirations for services on this island. It is doable. Eoin is absolutely right and so is everybody else who says it is about political change. Wind the clock back within the lifetime of my parents, there was a Government on these islands that rose to this challenge. 1945 millions suffered and died. Two world wars in a period of 21 years, our class on its knees facing exploitation, poverty in the most extreme forms. But, also during that period the organisation of workers into trade unions – the stuff we have been celebrating all of this decade, and come 1945 ordinary people did the unthinkable. They voted by a landslide for a socialist Government in Britain. And what did the socialist Government do with a wrecked economy and empty coffers? It took into national ownership its roads, its transport, its utilities in the form of its water, electricity and gas, its steel manufacturing, its mining on the basis that this was the best way to develop those services and those industries at the service of the people for a fair and better kind of society. And it went further. It built public houses where there were none. It built schools for working class kids. It developed the welfare state and it created something superb which is 65 years old today and still surviving and it is called the National Health Service. And what that Government did was the bane of those who today are back in control and they spent from 1945 to this day dismantling what had been created on behalf of all of the people. Maggie Thatcher came in and wrecked the nationalisation agenda and privatised everything in sight until today we are left with our welfare state and our National Health Service. And, we are determined that the spirit of '45, and if you have not seen the work of Ken Loach in that movie, forget it, show it in your unions and have that discussion. The spirit of '45 can be recovered in both jurisdictions. I am finishing now Chair, I am supporting the motion and I say we as a movement can do this.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Patricia.

Andrew Phelan, ASTI

Colleagues, Andrew Phelan, ASTI. I am speaking in favour of the motion, just a couple of sentences of it and I will explain why I am speaking in favour of it. The motion says that the crisis is basically being created by financial and European banking institutions. It says, the austerity policies being pursued in both the Dáil and Westminster Parliament are neither relevant or rational and they are political. Transferring wealth from labour to capital, from working people to bondholders, creditors, corporations, financial institutions. I agree with that and I have no problem there. The problem I have is if we vote in favour of this what are we going to do about it and where are we going to stand as trade unionists. And what I mean by that is if this is truly what the speakers coming here and saying they believe in, now I could be wrong, why then when they come into convention, you get a leaflet advertising a financial institution taking money from our salary, promising health care – private health care may I say – private pensions, private and taking money from us and sharing that around financial institutions and gambling on stock markets. Why is that statement here? So, the thing I would like to know is – I am in favour absolutely of the motion but as a trade unionist and if we really believe in these, why is this sort of thing happening? Sending out the wrong message – it should not be happening. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any other speakers on Motion 3? Ok, I am going to put the first three motions to the vote. Motion 1, standing in the name of SIPTU – those in favour please show – carried.

Motion 2, standing in the name of the Executive – those in favour please show – carried.

Motion 3, standing in the name of UNITE, the amended Motion 3 which has been accepted – those in favour please show – carried. Thanks very much colleagues.

Can we now move on to Motion No. 4, Financial Transaction Tax standing in the name of CWU.

Ian McArdle, CWU

President, delegates, Ian McArdle moving Motion No. 4 on behalf of the Communications Workers' Union. Before I say a very brief few words I just want to say two things. First of all the motion refers to an ICTU paper on the case for a financial transaction tax which I recommend you read if you haven't read it. It makes what is a tricky enough topic quite accessible and very easy to understand.

The second thing I want to say is, I will probably make a few disparaging remarks about bankers in the course of my few words and I want to be very clear – this may go without saying – that I am not talking about the kind of people that are represented by a number of the unions here today. I am not talking about the bankers who are customer facing and frontline. I am not talking about the bankers who work in admin and call centres around the country. I am of course talking about the kind of bankers who don't realise that their phone calls are being recorded and who reveal themselves to devastating effect in the media. I am talking about the kind of bankers who indulge in financial engineering and very risky behaviour and who brought Europe to the brink of disaster. These are the bankers who happen to be largely placed in the IFSC and London City and all those places.

Delegates, the motion calls for two things. First of all that Ireland joins the financial transaction tax procedure which is being debated at the moment. It should be noted that Minister Noonan

has said that Ireland won't participate in the financial transaction tax unless our neighbours in the UK get involved which seems like a weak excuse. The other thing the motion calls for is for the CSO to gather data on the potential lost revenue if we don't implement this financial transaction tax. And in the absence of implementation I think the call to the CSO to gather data could be very interesting. We might begin to realise that we are passing up the opportunity to take in between 490 and 730 million Euros per annum. So what is the financial transaction tax itself? It is a proposed tax on 0.1 percent on transactions in bonds and equities on a tax of 0.01 percent on derivatives transactions. The aim of the tax is twofold – one to generate revenue, which I think we can all agree is only fair. This would be a fair contribution from the financial sector that would act as some sort of a moral hazard and obviously go some way to address the disastrous few years we have experienced. And the other interesting objective of the tax is to reduce speculative trading which gives so much power to the banking sector and which create such high levels of risk and instability. On the revenue side it is ironic that Ireland is a country has borne such a heavy, heavy cost in the financial disaster that we will pass up the opportunity to take in 490 to 730 million Euros a year, described by the way by the ESRI and Central Bank as a modest sum. But, the countries that are going to press ahead with this tax will do so by January 2014. There just between 9 and 11 countries looking at the tax including I should note Spain, Italy and Greece and they will probably yield about 18 billion Euros if they implement the tax as proposed. If the 27 EU countries implement it we could yield 57 billion Euros. The cost of this crisis I should point out so far is 4.6 trillion Euros, or 39 percent of the GDP of the EU27. It's being proposed by the German Confederation of Trade Unions, DGB, that this 57 billion Euros could be used to start a new Marshall Plan that could get the European economies back on track. The money would be invested in transport infrastructure, broadband infrastructure, education and training, housing and energy. Wouldn't it be appropriate delegates that the economic rebirth of the European Union would be in some way funded by the banking sector that brought us to the very brink of disaster. And what do the bankers say? They cry foul. Unsurprisingly they tell us that this will lead to a flight of capital, it will cost jobs, it will weaken our pensions. The bankers will tell us this is bad for business. But their claims are not credible as evidenced by the ICTU document. And, I think delegates, their saving battleship is falling on deaf ears. Their crocodile tears should be evaporated and the red hot anger we have all experienced listening to those tapes, which gave such an unique insight into the financial services sector driven by hubris and unbridled greed. This motion delegates is about a fair contribution. It is like taking something from casino capitalism and giving it to productive capitalism. I urge you to support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Seconded for the motion? Formerly? Thank you. Any speakers? Ok. We move to Motion No. 5, standing in the name of RMT.

Declan Roche, RMT

President, delegates, Declan Roche National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers' Union (RMT), moving Motion No. 5, European Union Economic Policy. Congress is appalled at the European Union's continued drive towards neo-liberal austerity. It's erosion of workers' rights and its intensifying use of unemployment as its main economic regulator. Congress believes that a decision of the EU that resulted in a tax on the savings of the Cypriot workers and their families, clearly demonstrates the callous disregard for the welfare of ordinary people. Congress agrees to do all that is necessary to fight the EU's anti-worker agenda and send solidarity to all our brothers and sisters who are fighting austerity. Congress believes the EU is demonstrating that it is fundamentally pro-privatisation, anti-workers and undemocratic. Delegates, I urge you to support this motion. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you. Is there a seconder? Formally? Any speakers?

Bernard Harbour, IMPACT

Bernard Harbour from IMPACT who is supporting Motion 5 and we are doing that on the basis that it criticises current trends in EU policies but we think it is also important to make the distinction between current EU policy and the EU itself because otherwise we run the risk that the Congress position could be misconstrued or worse misrepresented by those mainly on the political right who are simply anti EU. The Barroso Commission is rightly criticised as ultra-liberal, austerity obsessed, pro-privatisation and anti-worker. Last month Jacques Delors himself called the Barroso Commission punitive and alienated. I think the former Commission President's comments are a reminder that the EU has not always followed a neo-liberal path. But, it is important to express our determination along with colleagues in the ETUC and its affiliates to finally campaign for an alternative EU approach. The arguments were well articulated by ETUC General Secretary, Bernadette Ségol in Dublin last month, and I am sure she will do the same tomorrow, and when the ETUC called for a massive EU investment programme of between 140 and 180 billion and she correctly said that this level of investment was necessary to reboot the European economy to create jobs but all also to rebuild the social Europe envisaged by the EU's founders and I believe craved by a majority of EU citizens today. And, we shouldn't forget either, Conference, that Irish trade unions frequently look to the European Court of Justice to vindicate our members' rights and that many if not most of workplace protection is now rooted in EU law. And if I pick it up, health & safety laws, equality legislation, restrictions on working time, workers' rights albeit limited to information and consultation and many other things, and I believe that at best we would struggle to retain the current level of these protections as they are in either jurisdiction if the EU did not exist. Under the guise of Euro scepticism, the political right sees these protections in very straightforward terms. They see them simply as bureaucracy and red tape. They want out of the EU or the EU out of these areas so that they can sweep away workers' protections and let the market run amok. So, in supporting Motion 5 we need to be crystal clear that Congress is not in this anti-Europe camp and that we will continue to work and campaign for an EU based on full employment, decent work, citizens and workers' rights and strong public services.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Bernard. Any other speakers to Motion 5? Ok, we move on then to Motion 6, standing in the name of PCS.

Barney Lawn, PCS

(start of speech missing).....as well as our terms and conditions. Congress, the UK Government continues with its relentless attack. I am sure you agree with me that the UK Government's policies on austerity constitute an attack on the public sector, the welfare state, workers' rights and are proven to be economically counter-productive as the economy flat-lines, the deficit widens, poverty increases and accredited agencies downgrade the UK. I make no apology for reminding you that the average PCS member is over £1,200 worse off due to the pay freeze, the pay cap and the extra pension contributions while bankers and company directors receive huge bonuses. Congress, you may also want to be aware that 40 percent of PCS members who will administer universal credit will themselves be in receipt of this and that is why PCS is still in dispute with the UK Government - a discredited Government who still refuses to come to the negotiating table. While they refuse to talk, our members will continue to walk.

Congress, can I also pay tribute to tens of thousands of PCS members who continue to take action and to the colleagues in the movement who have supported our action by visiting picket lines and sending messages of solidarity.

The turn-out for our action has been solid and the campaign continues with further strike action, work to rules, overtime bans and over the summer we will be refreshing our strategy and will continue to seek to get joint action with all our unions where this can be achieved. Your support will continue to be required as we witness Osborne making further cuts as part of his comprehensive spending review last week, a further 11 billion. He is slashing billions from Government departments, unilaterally ending pay progression in the civil service which is by no means automatic. In most areas it is a system which moves employees from the minimum of the scale to the rate for the job. A further 1% pay cap on public sector pay to 2016, a further 144,000 job cuts in the public sector despite all the evidence that this austerity is making things worse not better. George Osborne is not only incompetent and seriously out of touch. By ploughing ahead with more cuts instead of the badly needed investment to help our economy grow, Osborne is proved to be a failed Chancellor by putting politics before the needs of the country.

In conclusion, Conference, support this motion, continue to support the PCS campaign and call for a general strike. That is the only way the cabinet of millionaires is going to pay any attention. Support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Barney. Is there a seconder for the motion? Formally? Speakers?

Thomas Mahaffey, UNISON

President, delegates, Thomas Mahaffey from UNISON supporting Motion 6. On the issue of welfare reform the Northern Ireland Executive have the opportunity to mobilise thousands of people in a united campaign against welfare cuts and demand that the UK Government invest more money in the North. They had the opportunity to protect the most vulnerable, and to prevent more of our children being pushed into severe poverty. On the 15th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement they had the opportunity to show the relevance of devolution and local policy makers the lives of local people. They refused to do so. The result is a Northern Ireland Welfare Bill which is identical to GB. The delay in the rolling out of universal credit, payment flexibilities and other concessions are welcome. Victories in the trade union campaign will do little to soften the blow for the hundreds of thousands affected by cuts to housing benefits, the employment supports, and the income support. They will do little for people with disabilities and mental health conditions who are losing benefits through sanctions. An extra 10,000 children in poverty as families on the threshold struggle to afford basic essentials such as food and fuel. Add to this devastating public spending cuts, job losses, growing unemployment, the outlook is bleak particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable. The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission has made it clear that the Welfare Bill will have a devastating impact on the human rights of the most vulnerable and most marginalised and will destabilise the most deprived communities. They have made clear that the current 'bedroom tax' proposals are incompatible with the human right to shelter and housing as many thousands of vulnerable people are forced to seek new housing away from their long-standing neighbours and support networks. As always, it is the poorest bearing the brunt of cuts which at the same time living in the areas least able to afford jobs to those thrown off benefits to historic patterns of discrimination, long-term unemployment and underinvestment. The local political parties seem to have decided which side they are on and it is not the poorest and most vulnerable. We support the motion's call for a strike but one day of action is not enough. Strategic industrial action strategy is essential. There is a better, fairer way and the trade union movement must continue to take the lead. We must continue to create the widest

possible engagement with people. We must continue to march, demonstrate, confront and strike in order to secure a decent and civilised society for all. Lease support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Thomas.

Joe Roe, CPSU

Joe Roe, CPSU speaking in support of the motion. Delegates, I know this motion is going to the floor and it is actually something that unions in the Republic should think about taking on, because, what is happening at the moment in the Republic and indeed in Northern Ireland is the least able sections of society who are being attacked. We are now five years into this crisis. There has been no recruitment in the public service south of the border. They were actually the only real employers of people with disabilities so that means for the last five years nobody that I know of with a disability has been recruited. Furthermore some politicians seem to think that unemployment is a lifestyle choice. It is not a lifestyle choice comrades. If you cannot get a job, you cannot get a job. So, in supporting this motion I think we need to be focussing on the less well-off in our society – the disabled, the unemployed, the single mothers, single parents. So, delegates, and I would urge ICTU head office in Parnell Square to take on board that maybe we should look to doing something similar south of the border to highlight the further marginalisation of people already on the margins. So, delegates, I would urge you to support this motion. Thank you delegates.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any other speakers to this motion? Ok. We will move on then to Motion No. 7 standing in the name of Dublin Trades Council.

Michael O'Reilly, Dublin Trades Council

Michael O'Reilly on behalf of the Dublin Trades Council. Conference, comrades and friends and President – I shouldn't forget you. I want to say in relation to the motion, that what strikes me about this and in the general debate, is that I remember listening to a television programme recently and a then unknown and obscure French general known by the name of Charles De Gaulle was about to make a speech in London. And he had to address a European crisis of far worse dimensions that we face. His country was occupied by German militarists and fascists, and he had to make the first broadcast of the free French so he nervously said to Winston Churchill, what do you think I should say to the French people? And, Churchill said, tell them to do three things – resist, resist, resist. That is what we should do to what's being imposed on us in all these austerity measures because that's the only policy that we can take up as a movement but we have to have the courage to do it.

I welcome in particular the debate which says, that there are forces now in Europe that haven't got the stomach or even in Government that may not have the stomach to go to the 3 per cent that we all think we have to do. And then I pose the contradiction – that why did we as a movement support changing our constitution to put in a 1 per cent goal? I think there is a contradiction in all of that. Sometimes we act in contradictory ways to our interest and our own policies. The Dublin Trades Council has been trying to evolve a situation where we involve ourselves with community groups, with all kinds of other organisations who are resisting this austerity and I think that is what the movement as a whole should do because I don't think we have all the answers. And, if we have some good answers and undoubtedly we do, and I commend the stuff, I think we have to explain to our members, as the great Communist poet, Bertolt Brecht used to say to people, if you are hungry read a book, it is a weapon. These policies that the Nevin Institute are developing – they are not developing them just to win some abstract economic debate – they are developing for us to turn them into weapons in a struggle for ideas as well as a struggle of classes. And the clash of ideas and classes and we

must take on this struggle and indeed in this struggle we must not only intervene in the main media, we must also be transformative and start developing our own media – a different media to challenge the ideas that are dominant in our society.

Now the motion talks about repudiating the debt and of course the biggest act of socialisation took place under the Fianna Fáil Government when they made somebody else's debt our debt. In an amazing transformation of wealth one of the biggest distributive acts of moving wealth except not on the basis of Robin Hood but on the basis of Hood robbing economics. They took from the poor and they gave to the rich and we are saddled with that burden. And the reason we are told that we have to do this is if we don't follow this rigidly, financiers will lose confidence in us! Isn't that amazing – they won't have confidence in us if we apply the rules of capitalism but if we adopt socialism they will be full of confidence in us. What gillies do they think we are? So, I believe we have now the ideas – we have a platform and I am glad to say that the motion has been accepted that we should repudiate this debt. We have to now go about organising and we should understand that it is not just good enough to applaud people in Northern Ireland who say they are going to take industrial action to advance their aims against Government, to applaud the Greeks and the Spanish and the Italians and everybody in Europe who takes industrial action but to say that we are somehow unique from all of this indifference, and I am well aware when I say this, that our members are not clambering at the door looking for industrial action. I am well aware of that fact but we have to design a strategy which encourages them to have the confidence to challenge Government in that form. That is our responsibility as a movement and we have to lead it.

The last point the motion talks about is a simple thing. We have to find a political analysis which takes us forward in this situation and this is extraordinary difficult. Colleagues, I don't believe in the politics of what I call 'the worse, the better'. I believe that we should always try to ameliorate the situation but we truly have got it wrong with the participation of our movement with Fine Gael. I think we have to re-examine that policy and I think we would be in a better position were Labour leading in opposition with the support of Republicans and Independents progressively. We would then for our arguments have strong political support. We have a very weak political support for it now but we should try and learn the lessons of these things and think our way through them. I commend the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Michael. Is there a seconder for the motion? Formerly. Any speakers? Good, ok, thank you.

Can we now take votes on motion 4, 5, 6, and 7. Motion 4, standing in the name of the CWU, those in favour? That's adopted.

Motion 5, standing in the name of RMT, those in favour? Carried.

Motion 6, standing in the name of PCS, Fairer Better Way, those in favour please show – carried.

Motion 7, standing in the name of Dublin Trades Council, those in favour please show, thank you.

Can we now take a vote on Section 1 of the report please. Those in favour? Report is adopted. Thank you.

We move on then to Motion No. 8, Joe.

Joe O'Flynn, Treasurer of Congress

President, General Secretary, delegates, it is my pleasure on behalf of the Executive Council to propose Motion No. 8 on 'Older People' to conference. I think, delegates, we are all acutely aware that the experience of affiliates is quite mixed in relation to the structures and the involvement of retired members and older people within the movement generally. I think in some cases it is evident that there is little or no involvement within affiliates in respect of accommodating older people and retired members, while in other organisations affiliated to Congress, there is an extensive network of involvement right throughout the country. And, in some cases there is recognition of the role of retired members by means of inclusion of representation right up to National Executive Council level. The Executive motion calls for the establishment of a Review Committee and that committee's role would be to carry out a mapping exercise of the organisation within Congress and the organisation right throughout the various affiliates to identify what services are provided to retired members and indeed what services are required for retired members and older people from us in relation to measures to enhance quality of life for those people. We also in that motion have a reference to the resource implications both for Congress itself and indeed for affiliates because there is no point whatsoever in putting in place concrete structures to enhance the involvement and not to resource the measures to implement those structures then.

We are very, again, acutely aware of the growing number of retired members within society generally and people as we know are living longer, people clearly have issues in relation to retirement and in particularly older people as they go on in life. But, the positive is that there is an enormous wealth of experience of skills, wisdom and talent and indeed loyalty amongst the people that went before us and who are now retired. And what we want to do in Congress and indeed the affiliates now is to embrace all of those talents and skills in a much more positive fashion than heretofore.

Colleagues, we are absolutely of the belief that older people have an enormous amount to offer to our movement and they are willing to give of themselves at this particular very challenging period in our history. There is often a view amongst some people that maybe older people have done what was asked of them and there is nothing further to give. Well, I quite frankly completely disagree with that and I think a majority of opinion in Congress is that older people and retired people have an enormous amount to give. And, I just want to reflect back and I suppose the best illustration that I think I can demonstrate to you of the value of retired and older people to our society and to our movement, is the fact in the Irish presidential debate, there was a lot of questions asked in relation to one particular candidate and his age and whether he would be able to do the job or not. Well, the person I am referring to colleagues is the one and only, our own, Michael D Higgins who has been a life-long trade union member and a life-long activist in our movement. And, I have to say that it gives me no greater pleasure than to recognise the role that he has played as President of the Republic of Ireland in identifying the alternative that is out there that exists that we have been promoting for the last five years to the austerity and to the cuts and to the attack on ordinary people throughout the island of Ireland. The fact that he has given an huge expression to the legacy of the 1913 Lock-Out in the last number of months, in some respects against a lot of criticism of the neo-liberals who would prefer that he would just go along and do the social niceties involved in the presidency. And, I think, that the ultimate demonstration of what older people and indeed Michael D have to offer was in the last couple of days when he spoke on behalf of all of the people of Ireland in relation to the banking tapes expose – colleagues, he is an inspiration to us, he is an inspiration to older people and I think that we should lift from that inspiration and I commend this motion to you, and we should invite our older and our retired members to become much more involved than ever before in our organisation. Go raibh mile math agat.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Ok, thanks Joe.

Pamela Dooley, UNISON

President, delegates, Pamela Dooley, Executive Council member seconding Motion 8. From the Biennial Report and no doubt from contributions which we will hear from delegates in the course of this conference, it is clear that our retired members across the movement are a core component of the trade union movement. They have the commitment, the experience and the knowledge and as they move into retirement, they all also have some additional time to dedicate. Affiliates and Congress alike need to ensure that we harness all this knowledge this commitment and put it to effective use organising, lobbying and advocating for change. This is not just about setting up committees. There is an end goal which our society would be foolish to ignore. The demographic picture is changing. Most of us in the movement are becoming the older generation and we will soon be the majority of the population. Discrimination and social exclusion against older people in our society is endemic. Our retired members have been challenging the nature and extent of this discrimination directly with Government. They are increasingly regarded by politicians as a lobby which must be responded to. Our retired members are the experts on these and all the other issues on our conference agenda this week, fighting austerity, cuts and inequality, protecting workplace rights and protecting our public services. This motion instructs the Executive Council to establish a Review Committee to identify the structures and services necessary to ensure their full inclusion and participation in our movement.

The experience of my own union through its Retired Members Forum is an example of what a powerful force and lobby older people can be. The UNISON Retired Members Forum was formed in 2008 and they have played a crucial role in all our campaigns to put public services at the heart of our strategy for building a stronger economy and a more equal and fairer society. Forum members have participated in all UNISON's and trade union rallies, demonstrations and strikes in opposition to cuts in public services and the welfare state. Members have distributed UNISON information on this issue across the wider trade union structures and community networks. They encourage participation in the activities in the wider pensioners' movement in Ireland and GB. They promote social and welfare activities and participate in recruitment and welfare programmes. They are currently lobbying against the closure of residential care homes, fuel poverty as well as transport and community safety proposals that impact directly on older people. I would encourage all unions to utilise the skills and experience of their retired members and cooperate fully with the Review Committee when established. We must all ensure that proper structures with adequate funding are in place to enable retired members to continue to participate fully in their union's activities. Please support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any speakers?

I have just been asked to remind those of you who are a couple of years younger than me that #decentworkbdc is for anyone tweeting during the conference. I don't know what that means! Can I also ask anyone coming to the rostrum that they all heed the lights please. Once the red light flashes, you are well over your time. Once the red light is on you are over your time.

Ruairi Creaney, UNISON

Ruairi Creaney, UNISON and ICTU Youth. I think it is absolutely vital to support this motion. It is very important to encourage older people and our retired members to stay involved in our movement. As a young trade union activist I believe it is vital to retain these people. These

people have worked all their lives and gained vital experience that we can learn from in future struggles. In the present political climate, there are constant attempts in the media and elsewhere to create artificial divisions within our society so we have public sector against private sector, unemployed against low-paid workers, immigrants against natives and in this case, there is recent attempts to divide young against old. I believe the only division in society that matters is that of class – the rich against the poor – and it is in that spirit that I support the motion. Thank you comrades.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Conference, because of the time constraints I am not going to take any more speakers on this motion. We have two guest speakers to address this motion who have five minutes each and we are on 12.50 now and we are told by Standing Orders to finish at 1. So, regrettably, I can't take any more speakers. Perhaps the opportunity will arise at a later part of the agenda for anyone else who wishes to come up. So, can I call on a vote on Motion 8 please. Those in favour please show. Motion carried, thank you. Can I now call upon Michael O'Halloran to the rostrum and address conference, from the Retired Workers Republic of Ireland Committee, and you have five minutes Michael and they are starting now!

Michael O'Halloran, Retired Workers Committee, Republic of Ireland

Chairman, thank you very much – that's an extension of what I was told – two minutes, but anyway I want to share something with you as an old person. Being the oldest person in the hall, I want to share something with you. When you get to my age, chastity is very easy but discipline is impossible.

First of all can I thank the Executive Council for the motion and you for having passed it. It is very important, and I don't have the time to go into all the reasons why it is important except some of them. I am also glad to have the opportunity of speaking in this great Assembly Hall for two reasons. One is that my grandfather was a historian of a kind, and I asked him one time as a small boy what was the difference between a Presbyterian and a Catholic? And he told me the following story that I will share with you as you are in this great hall. Benjamin Franklin, one of the signatories to the Declaration of Independence in America – a famous American for all kinds of reasons – was in a shipwreck one time off the English coast. And after the shipwreck he said the following: If I was a Catholic I would have built a chapel here thanking God but being a good Presbyterian I am going to build a lighthouse.

I also had to consider what would I say about 1913 because everyone is talking about it. And there is no real connection between 1913 and older people because there weren't older people in those days, they died quite young. Now we are living longer and that is good. We are in the departure lounge of life, we are not yet on the plane and that is why we can still keep on talking and will. But the connection with 1913 that people have missed to some extent is that the women of 1913 were the heroes or the heroines. It wasn't just the British Trade Union Congress that kept the strike going, but it was those women and their courage and that should not be forgotten. But 1913 has been mentioned so much now that I was expecting to hear a judge sometime to justify them keeping their salaries but it didn't happen, didn't happen. But, to get back to older people, the reason why this is important is that decent work, yes, but decent retirement is important as well because we go on living in retirement. We go on needing income. We go on needing a health service etc. etc., but from that health service can also come employment if we had the courage in this country to face up to the realities of tax. And I am not talking about just tax on the rich, I am talking about tax in itself. When the Government set up their Commission on Taxation and they said we must look at this but don't increase tax, what a Commission. I mean looking at tax but you couldn't make a recommendation for increasing it. If we wanted social democracy of the Scandinavians we will have to pay their taxes and then not only would we get good standards of living but we

will get good employment in the public service as well who would deliver to the needs of older people. So these issues are important and our committee tries to deal with them as they can but the structure is inadequate and that is why the motion is so important.

I also want to share with you something we did, not this year, but a couple of years ago. We ran a conference on lobbying and we were all shocked because we knew we had to lobby at local level and international level but we were told the following – and things haven't changed in the trade union movement – now that you know what you want, do you know how to get it. We had to pick the right message to get what we want, and one of them is influencing Government and we as older people know that it is through influencing Government that we will enhance our standard of living with the help of the trade union movement. And, this is for Jack O'Connor, my good friend. Jack, I was doing some research yesterday in the National Library and I came across the first report of the Irish Trade Union Congress – 1894 – and it was full of advertisements from every employer in Dublin, that young man that didn't like the *Financial Times* thing – he definitely wouldn't have liked this conference either. And, also just to share another history with you. You know the tramway company which were responsible for the Lock-Out, they gave free transport to all delegates in Dublin for the duration of the conference! So, it is an interesting time but what was most interesting for me was the rural workers, the farmworkers who attended that conference. 500, well 500 didn't attend but they had an organisation of 500, their two delegates – they came from Athy, that is where they were mostly based, and one of their delegates was an MP. So even then they recognised the importance of politics. They didn't call themselves a trade union, they called themselves the 'Knights of the Plough' and they called themselves that because they were expressing their value about the dignity of work.

So, thank you very much for this motion. I look forward to playing a part in the review and I hope that we will bring a new vision to older people, retired people in the trade union movement that's appropriate to their needs and to your needs as well. Thank you very much President.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks for that Michael, your timing was impeccable. Margaret.

Margaret Galloway, Congress Retired Workers, Northern Ireland

President, delegates, comrades, my name is Margaret Galloway. I chair the Retired Workers Committee in Northern Ireland and I am what your future looks like! Unions must keep members involved throughout their lives both working and retired. You do not cease to be a trade unionist on the day you walk out through the store or factory gates. Working members need to be educated on the benefits retired members can bring to the organisation. At a time when younger workers' rights are being eroded, it would be useful to have the benefit of the experience of the generation that built up those rights. Older workers in Northern Ireland have also had the experience of ensuring workplaces remain unified and harmonious despite events on the street and the rhetoric and the political classes at that time. Identifying the services that retired members require to further their interests in developing an adequate life quality, recommending necessary changes to trade union structures and identifying the role Congress should play in facilitating the inclusion of retired workers in the movement must be good for unions, good for retired members and good for intergenerational issues. We in all branches of the pensioner movement in Northern Ireland believe in working together and indeed at the recent National Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool, resolved to set up a joint working party with our comrades in the Welsh TUC and the Scottish TUC to work together for the benefit of both today's pensioners and future pensioners. The media would wish to portray pensioners as scroungers living on the backs of younger people and set generations against each other. I have not found that these are the sentiments of younger workers.

I would like to finish with a call for solidarity across the generations and remind everyone that our today is your tomorrow. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Margaret, thanks very much. Can I just say we are right on the blow so we are about to adjourn until this afternoon. Can I just remind everyone that this afternoon is a private session, no one will be allowed into the hall or into the gallery unless they are a delegate. Can I also remind you that the boardroom upstairs is where the NERI event is being held. It is being held now and see you all back here at 2.30. Thanks very much.

Tuesday 2 July, 2013
Afternoon Session – Congress Organisation
(Private Session)

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Could I ask the Chairperson of Standing Orders, Mr Jack McGinley to introduce Standing Orders Report No. 3.

Jack McGinley, Chairperson of Standing Orders Committee

Delegates, Conference Standing Orders Report No. 3 – it is a verbal report. In line with Standing Orders Report No. 1, the arrangements for the exchange of credential stubs and the issuing of voting cards and ballot papers will be as follows – credential stubs will be exchanged for voting cards during the conference proceedings commencing on Tuesday at 2.30pm until 11.00am tomorrow morning. Each delegate must personally exchange his or her credential stub for a voting card. Liam Berney and Fergus Whelan will be in the hall to facilitate the exchange.

The Standing Orders Committee has received two Emergency Motions, Emergency Motion No 1 on Community Cuts which reads ‘Conference directs the incoming Executive Council to demand consultation on the proposed alignment of local development, to ensure that the jobs, pay and conditions of staff of the local development companies are protected’, in the name of IMPACT and SIPTU. And, “Conference, noting that the Fiscal Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act undermines the principle of collective bargaining in the public sector and concerned that this may set a precedent for the private sector; noting that the legislation provides extra-ordinary powers to Government ministers to unilaterally vary terms and conditions of employment; noting that there is no specified end period for this ‘emergency’ legislation; and finally noting that this anti-trade union legislation has been introduced in the centenary of the 1913 lockout;

Calls on the incoming Executive to mount a vigorous and robust campaign against this legislation and anti-worker legislation in both jurisdictions with the goal of seeing it repealed”, in the names of UNITE, CPSU, INMO AND IBOA.

Standing Orders are prepared to accept both Emergency Motions and they will be facilitated on Thursday morning in the early session there on ‘Workplace Rights’.

Two other pieces of business – Standing Orders has approved a raffle in relation to the Gaza limited edition Robert Ballagh 100 prints of James Larkin, proceeds to go for the children in Gaza to bring a group of young children to Ireland from Gaza to allow them to play and meet GAA, FAI, IRFU players and this will give the children a break from the siege and also increase awareness of the situation in Gaza. That will be facilitated in a space to be provided. And, finally, there was a request to allow a poster to be exhibited but given that Standing Orders had already at the request of the facility here not to have posters exhibited, have refused that request. I move Chair.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any speakers to Standing Orders Report No. 3? Ok, do we have your agreement on endorsing Standing Orders Report No. 3? Agreed. Thanks Jack.

Now as I said, just before we close, this afternoon's session is a private session and can I assume that no members of the public, press, visitors or aliens have been allowed in to the hall. And can I also ask you to keep in mind that you should not be engaging in this 'hash-tag' stuff during the course of this session as the information that is going to be discussed in the room this afternoon is for our consideration and not for general consumption so I would ask you to refrain from any form of electronic divulgence of information beyond this room. Thanks very much.

Could I first of all call upon the Treasurer Joe O'Flynn to introduce the financial statement.

Joe O'Flynn, Treasurer of Congress

President, delegates, good afternoon. Could I first of all President thank those affiliates and indeed the conference for re-electing me as Treasurer for one more term. I really appreciate the endorsement and hopefully try and do a little bit better in the two years ahead.

Colleagues, I want to present the report in relation to the overall financial position and indeed the membership position of the affiliates for the last couple of years. And, in doing so I think it is important that while it is not the sexiest part of the agenda this week, I think it tees up the discussion that we are going to have subsequent to this report in terms of the Commission of Trade Unions because this report effectively identifies the strength and weaknesses of the organisation that is Congress and indeed by extension of the affiliates of Congress as well. I want to maybe first of all address the issue of total number of members affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. We have just flagged up there what it was in 2010 and 2011 when we would have reported at the last conference in Killarney, and you see in 2010 we had an excess of 816,00 members affiliated and unfortunately this year, 2013, we have dropped below to the number of 778,136 members. That is an actual fall of 38,712 over four years. And, in reality if the truth was known it is probably a little bit less than that and I will explain that as I go on through the presentation. You will see that in the last two years it is a fall of over 19,000 and from 2012 to 2013 the actual reduction is 9,159. 6,550 of that reduction is reflecting the membership affiliating in the Republic and 2,609 reduction reflecting Northern Ireland. Clearly what it also reflects colleagues is the very challenging environment which we have operated in for the last number of years and we have talked about it before lunch in the context of the economy but in real terms these are thousands upon thousands of our members who have lost their livelihoods over the period of this crisis. It is a really telling figure in terms of the damage that has been done throughout the economy and on the island of Ireland. The breakdown, colleagues, as a matter of interest is that our membership is now 52% female and 48% male. This is a slide which is just giving a very quick overview of the last ten years and you will see that 2009 is circled for the very good reason that was our peak over the ten year period when we hit an excess of 830,000 members affiliated to Congress and you will appreciate that was the period just about the beginning of the collapse and certainly from 2009 on, the huge reduction in affiliated members was in construction and associated industries and since then right throughout all sectors of the economy on the island.

I want to just flag up in terms of 2013 you will see that, even though there is somewhat of a reduction, we want to record the fact that twelve unions affiliated out of the forty-eight actual recorded an increase in membership for this year, while twenty-one unions recorded a decrease and the others remained static. But, the actual density which is always a very, very important figure for us to take note of in terms of the strength of the movement on the island, is at the moment for the affiliated members of Congress, if you just take the affiliated unions, it is 37% of the workforce and if you take the non-affiliated membership it is now standing at 38%. So, in one sense we are still in a relative position of strength compared to many other developed countries but nevertheless it is not a place where we can be complacent and

certainly we need to have regard to that in the context of what we need to do in building from here on in.

In relation to the financial position of the organisation, colleagues, I want to reflect what is the consolidated position. This is the No. 1, No. 2 and the Northern Ireland Accounts for the union and we have just consolidated those into one for the purpose of the presentation and indeed we intend to have consolidated accounts presented here from here on in. I suppose the real figure if you go into the accounts in your pack, what you need to reflect on is that the income for Congress for this year was about, or from last year rather, was about €4.25 million, while expenditure pretty much matched that and those figures were replicated again in 2011. And, when you think of the discussion that we had this morning in relation to that we need to do as a movement in terms of messaging the alternative, in terms of campaigning, in terms of communicating with our own members and so forth, we are operating on a tiny, tiny budget in the overall context and certainly in comparison to what the other side has at its disposal in terms of money and financial power. While all of us are certainly challenged in relation to our finances at the moment, certainly Congress has been enormously challenged over the last couple of years and we have dropped from an income of over €6 million to now operating on just over €4 million. We need to be conscious of that. Now, in relation to the 2011 position you will see that we actually ran a deficit in the organisation of in excess of €58,000, whereas last year in 2012 we actually ran a very slight surplus €85,000. It is nothing to talk about but nevertheless it was a move in the right direction in terms of stabilising the finances of the organisation. And, I think it is important that you recognise that was done as a result of a major job of work within Congress itself in terms of reorganisation and restructuring and at this juncture I really do want to put on record the appreciation the affiliates and indeed myself as Treasurer of the work that was done by Sally-Ann, the Assistant General Secretary in particular and also of David and Peter but also reflecting the cooperation of all of the staff of Congress who helped to restructure the organisation to allow us to make the changes that means that we are now living within the means available to us.

Colleagues, I also obviously want to advise you that I think in Killarney two years ago we said to you that because we were challenged that we were looking at every single aspect of our expenditure in Congress and we have done that. I think I can safely say to you at this stage that all inefficiencies have certainly cut out of the organisation and we are operating on a very, very tight position financially at the moment.

The other issue is of course the core funding – programme funding – and efforts to access additional funding other than being dependent entirely on the affiliates but, as you know, that is always difficult and we took a decision some years ago that we would never, ever be dependent on Government funding in terms of running this organisation and I am glad to say that we are not dependent on Government funding either within the North or the Republic at this stage. We are pretty much self-sufficient and all of our programmes are geared towards. Nevertheless, any European funding that we have secured as far as I am concerned is a bonus. The net affect then colleagues is that we are operating with a smaller Congress but it is much more concentrated in terms of the work that the members of the Congress staff are now engaged in.

The on-going challenges I suppose we have to identify is the decline in funding here in Northern Ireland over the last couple of years and indeed the continued uncertainty of Government funding in the Republic itself. And, as I have said, we have been addressing that on an evolving basis over the last number of years.

The other major difficulty that I think I addressed to you as delegates two years ago in Killarney was the pension schemes both North and South and the deficit position of both.

Now, that is not uncommon – I think all of us realise defined benefit schemes right across the economy have been in quite some difficulty as a result of the economic collapse and also as a result of increasing annuity prices and low interest rates, and Congress pension schemes were no different. We were impacted by those issues but we have addressed the issue by applying for a Section 50 in relation to the scheme in the Republic and we have the schemes now under control within Congress.

The other item of course that is a huge challenge is the membership decline which I refer to and certainly over the last number of years I think all of us as organisations have felt the effect of membership decline in our various unions. However, I want to actually concentrate today on the positives because there are quite a number of positives which are working in our favour at the moment. There is a collaboration within the unions of Congress regarding Skillnets funding – that is ongoing – we have secured funding. There are some very good training programmes being operated under the auspices of Congress and that is a very, very good additional resource to our affiliates. In addition to that there is the CCN major funding for activation for people with disabilities and while the funding isn't huge, nevertheless, is assisting us in an area that is of huge importance to us as an organisation. And, the last thing I want to refer to on this particular slide is those affiliates, and by the way there are a number of them, who responded to our call two years ago to maintain their affiliation at the levels which were then pertaining notwithstanding the fact that those organisations would have lost membership, quite a number of the unions responded very positively by maintaining their affiliation levels at the pre-reduced level. That meant that financially we have been able to ride through what has been a very difficult storm for the last couple of years and I want to thank very sincerely those unions who took that decision and obviously have assisted Congress to survive through this period.

The other thing I wanted to reflect on positively was that there are quite a number of unions who came on board in relation to the Nevin Economic Research Institute and this was an idea that was first mooted by my colleague, Jack, when he was president of Congress. Initially, and I think I need to say this, he put a huge amount of work into developing that idea and selling it to a number of affiliates who eventually came on board and put their money into the project. And, since then, notwithstanding a very a difficult start for NERI it has developed itself in a very short period of time. It has been referred to here this morning as being one of the only organisations that has forecasted correctly, that has been recognised on the national airwaves and union after union now is standing up giving credit to Tom and the staff and to the work that NERI has done. And, for the very first time I think we have the intellectual capacity, we have the professional capacity to challenge the other side in relation to the arguments in respect to the direction this economy is being taken. And I want to say thank you to those organisations that have supported NERI since its inception and to encourage the other unions who haven't yet supported to come on board. It is a fantastic project and is one which we should all be proud of and all of us should own it.

I also want to refer to over the last number of years because money was tight we have had to levy affiliates from time to time and I suppose the most recent levy related to the 9th February rallies where we took to the streets with tens of thousands in Dublin and Cork and right throughout the country. That didn't happen by chance. There was an enormous amount of work put in behind the scenes by the Congress staff, by the affiliates to make it the magnificent success that it was but it took resources. It took resources to advertise and to put it together and those affiliates that came up trumps again, put their hands in their pockets and delivered 100% of the financing for that, I want to say a big thank you. It was a fantastic achievement and well done even though people were straining under financial pressure they came on board. It is the kind of thing we need to continue to be able to do as an organisation.

We need to be able to campaign and we need to be able to resource that campaigning in a meaningful way.

In relation to Youth Connect there is a magnificent programme going on. Just before lunch I had the great pleasure of proposing the motion in relation to Older People. Well this is coming at the project from the other side i.e. the young people. Particularly those young people in our secondary schools and this project has been running over the last number of years very, very successfully. The enthusiasm of the young people is just infectious and it is fantastic and again a number of affiliates have come on board and resourced this campaign. And, it is about securing about the future of our movement so well done to those affiliates who have supported that project.

The last reference I want to make here is in relation to the Lock-Out and again many references here all morning in relation to the Lock-Out and the legacy of the Lock-Out but we could not commemorate that event without putting on a number of different events in relation to the centenary. Reference was made by the General Secretary, David, to the tenement experience. I was there yesterday morning myself with a number of other colleagues and all I can say to you is that if you go, I guarantee you will not be disappointed. It is a magnificent experience and you will come out really, really proud of the fact that you are a member of a movement that is really making a difference in relation to the quality of life for all people on this island and I guarantee the hair will stand on the back of your head for those of you that have hair in relation to the experience. It is only about an hour and it is a fabulous experience and I want to because I think this is really important – the person who has driven this, there are lots of people who are getting credit and so forth, but the person who has driven this from day one is Sally Anne. She has been absolutely wedded to it from the very first minute that the idea came about and Sally Anne I think you should be very proud of the work you have done on that. Just in relation to the Lock-Out itself, again David referred to the support of the TUC and there is a wonderful event which will be happening on the weekend of the 5th and 6th October – it will basically be a re-enactment of a food ship and it will involve the British TUC with ourselves – that event is being supported by own union SIPTU, RMT, UNITE and Congress and again I think that will give us another occasion to thank our colleagues in the British TUC for the support that was given to us not just back then but indeed the collaboration since then and we need more and more of that. Obviously there is a lot more happening from August on in relation to the Lock-Out but I suppose the reason I am referring to it here is that quite a number of affiliates have again resourced this project. It would not have been possible without the unions coming on board and funding it because Congress was not in a position to do it all itself. We have put some money in but as a result of the contributions of the affiliates, that commemoration is actually going to be really successful and I think it will make us all wonderfully proud of the movement that we inherited and that we are living with today.

So, colleagues, that's a very quick overview of both the membership and the finances and indeed a number of events which are supported financially by the affiliates. I want to commend the audited accounts for 2011 and 2012 to you for their adoption and again thank you for the wonderful support to date. Go raibh mile math agat.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Joe. You have heard the financial report. Can I put it to you for agreement, agreed? Agreed.

I am now going to move on to the debate, Sally Anne, and by the way Sally Anne is also going to do a PowerPoint presentation which we can't see from here.

Sally Anne Kinahan, Assistant General Secretary

President, thank you, Joe thank you very much for your very supportive comments and delegates I just want to say that I am delighted to be able to address you here today. And, basically what I am going to do is open the debate on Section 4 and 5 of your report including the Appendices – Appendices 1-7. What we are looking at is Congress Organisation, we are looking at the whole area of our affiliations and membership and identity, we are looking at the work that's been done around the Commission of the Union, although we are going to get into the substantive debate about the Commission of the Union in a little while. We are looking at the establishment of NERI, the work of our various committees and you have already heard a report from our two excellent speakers from the Retired Workers Committees this morning and there will inputs over the course of the next couple of days from representatives from all of the other main committees. The work that is covered off in these chapters also includes the Trades Councils, the Congress Centres for the Unemployed, and our finances which has already been presented to you in detail by our Treasurer. We will be looking at campaigns, communications and our public engagement. And, as David Begg said earlier on today, the structure of the report is very much hinged on the whole decent work agenda which we see very much as the area of a fair resolution of the crisis that we are in. It is about employment, it is about decent jobs, it's about decent incomes including pensions, social security, it is about social protection and social support, and it is about rights including collective bargaining. It is an agenda which underpins everything that we are doing around 1913. This discussion has already been introduced. It has been threaded through the contributions of practically every speaker so far today. And as far as we are concerned, the agenda of 1913, the agenda then is the agenda as it is now. It is about decency, it's about respect, it's about dignity and it's about fairness. And the attack on workers, on the working class back then is as the attack on working people now. It's about reducing security, it's about increasing flexibility, it's about driving down pay and it's about the commodification of labour.

I want to say that I have been really inspired by the contributions that have been made so far today. And it is really heartening to hear that reassertion of our commitment to tackle unfairness. And not only to tackle unfairness but to advance the interest of working people, but I think we need to look at where we are at now and what needs to be done. And, I really do hope that we are going to hear not just what needs to be done but what unions are going to do to continue the struggle that we face, and I hope that is the discussion that is going to take place around the Commission of the Union.

So, where are we at now? Joe talked about the density, about our union membership and I have been showing this slide at every conference since 2003. So, for the last decade when you look at it you can see the situation has improved in relation to our density in the labour market among working people, but if you look at what was achieved in 1913 and what happened in the decades after 1913, we actually reached a point where the majority of workers were members of unions. And what we have seen since then in the last two decades is an erosion of that situation. And what we have seen more recently is the stabilisation and it really is that it hasn't happened because of our effectiveness I hasten to say – it has happened by default because most of the jobs that were lost in the economy were lost in non-union or low-unionised sectors. So in just in looking at the whole area of density we have to appreciate what our coverage looks like, how effective our influence is and the reality is this colleagues, that our density is lowest in the sectors where pay is lowest and where conditions of employment are weakest and where there is the most precarious employment and where there is the most vulnerability among working people. So, I suppose we have to take that into account when we are looking at what it is that needs to be done by our movement. And if we

look even further then around the whole issue of age, and I know that there will be representatives from our Youth Committee speaking to you, addressing this conference over the next couple of days, but we have to deal with the reality that membership has always been low amongst younger groups for a number of reasons that until people settle into a job that they see as permanent they are less likely to join a union. But, we don't make it that easy for people to join a union anyway. We have seen eroded away a kind of traditional base of apprenticeships which was also an area which was well unionised, but in addition to that we are now seeing a decline which we are going to see exacerbated because of the situation of the labour market. The fact that so many young people are leaving the country or emigrating and even more are facing the prospect of unemployment with few opportunities arising. So I think it is fair to say that we are challenged and that the fundamental weakness that has been arriving across the trade union movement over the last couple of decades was not addressed when we had potentially the capacity to address it, ok, or we had better capacity to address it. And that agenda is the agenda of organising. I suppose I am dismayed but also heartened that there is going to be such a significant debate arising shortly which is going to be focussing on this very issue that has not been addressed effectively to date. As has been said already by others, we have a vast potential. We have 800,000 union members on this island. We are in a better position than many in terms of our density. We have a presence in practically every town and city across the island. We are organised in tens of thousands of workplaces with tens of thousands of workplace representatives. We have some 30 Trades Councils. We have 24 Centres for the Unemployed, with over 700 CE participants – one of the largest if not the largest scheme in the country servicing some 500,000 people last year and most of the people that come across the threshold of our Centres are people who are facing unemployment or who are not actively participating or economically engaged, so we are well rooted in communities. We mobilised 120,000 across six centres in February – I am asking you who else can do this on the island and I am telling you that nobody could do it. Look at the organisation that went into that across this movement and the money that was put up without any question to make it happen. The vast network of retired members, the Youth Connect programme that Joe mentioned a couple of minutes ago, is delivering to more than 300 schools – almost 40 per cent of schools and it reached 11,000 senior cycle students – a very significant portion of the schools population and there is a huge appetite for it. We can't do enough of it and there has been a fantastic team out there driving it but we need to double our numbers and that is one of the things that I need to talk to you about. I need more money to make this happen. And, of course, the Nevin Economic Research Institute which has been mentioned so many times today. But, if you look at all this and if you add to it all of you, whether you are officials or activists that are located around your unions and active within your unions, there are thousands of you around the country. We have a meridian of committees that are effectively run, ok. We are a democratic institution but the question I am going to pose to you is, is this all joined up together? Are we all facing in the same direction? Do we all have a common objective that what we are trying to achieve, and I know that we vocalise it. We come to conference and we talk about our commitment and what it is that we want to see achieved but folks we actually haven't made this happen yet. So when you look at what we have in terms of our potential, we have the potential to be a major force for change. And, I think the reality is, David mentioned it in his speech in the opening of the Economic Session today, and we have the potential with our capital and our assets to create the political economy of the common good. We can make this happen but we have to actually join together. We have to turn everything around facing in the same direction and we have to go for it.

I want to talk to you about 1913. It has been well promoted but I want to quickly pull you through some of the things that are going to happen a) because you need to participate in it and secondly because I believe what we are doing is a real opportunity to engage, to win back support from people who may be a bit disillusioned about where we are going or what

we have been doing. I think it is a massive opportunity for the movement and I have to say that I think I have done a pretty good job of convincing Joe and others that I have done all the work on this but in fact I have just kind of happened to pick up the work that was already underway by the 1913 Committee and, colleagues, many of them retired trade union officials who have pulled together really the bones of the 1913 Commemoration and all I did was say, hey there is an opportunity – I am going to ask for some money to make more of this happen. The real work has been done by others, I am just kind of good at getting the praise for it. So, I want to tell you a little bit about what is going down. First of all there has been a lot of stuff that has happened. There was a marvellous Women of 1913 Conference back in Liberty Hall in March. There have been a number of other conference including the International Federation of Journalists, the ETUC Mid-Term Conference. There has been the work already done on the Tapestry Project and there is the One City, One Book and I want to tell you about this about this because it is the most successful One City, One Book in the history of the event, ok. And even I was speaking to a meeting of the City Counsellors and they were talking about how remarkable it was the reaction and response they have got from the public. There is an appetite for this. There is an appetite to understand our history and understand how we got from there to here. I want to also tell you about 'Living the Lock-Out', ok a great description has already been done of it. It is a marvellous, marvellous piece and it is actually not about the building, it is actually about the story of the labour movement. It is about the story about of living with the Lock-Out – about the optimism, about the despair and about the courage, the courage of women and I am asking all of you to book on line and spend five Euro and go to it for this reason. There are only 3,000 places – it is only running for nine weeks. It is being performed by ANU – they are a fantastic award winning Production Company – but the objective here is about making this happen as a legacy project, to make sure that it continues and it will continue if there is overwhelming support for it, so I am asking you to go online to 'Dublin Tenement Experience and book and go and see it because, as Joe said, it will make hairs standing out on the back of your head. It will make your heart race because it is a marvellous story about the trade union movement and about our continuing struggle for collective bargaining. There are many other things happening. President Michael D Higgins is organising or has organised an event for the 10th July and I am pretty sure he is going to make another one of those landmark speeches – so that is one to look out for. There is the Mother Jones Festival in July – the end of July, the beginning of August, down in Cork. The National Library Exhibition from August 22nd, the Commemorate Stamp is being issued in August, the Blood Sunday re-enactment on August 31st – we still money for that – which is being run by the Trades Council with the North Inner City Heritage Partnership and members of the trade union movement. There is the National Commemoration – we only just heard the week before last that the State is going to commemorate this on the 1st September – there is going to be a National Commemoration of the Great Lock-Out. The National Tapestry Project – many people here involved in it – which will be on exhibit from August – oh, there is the State Commemoration on September 1st. ANU, the group that is doing 'Living the Lock-Out' is going to put on 13 separate performances in September – it is the lead performance in the Dublin Fringe Festival – and it is going to be exploring different aspects of the Lock-Out including the Asquith Tribunal in Dublin Castle – do not miss it. The National Museum Badges and Banners Exhibition in September and as already mentioned, the Food Shipment Re-enactment on October 5th and 6th and the Schools Programme. And, I am actually going to finish on this and I want you to look at what's going to happen, ok, and understand that it not quite cast yet and we still need resources to make it happen because we are not going to just reach 300 schools, we are going to try and reach over 400 schools by December. We are going to engage young people in a kind of competitive creative piece and we going to extend understanding not just about the Lock-Out but about the ongoing struggle for decent work, so, roll it please. Thank you.

Film on Youth Connect Played at this point.

Sorry, I forgot to give you all a tip. Pádraig Yeats who is one of the major engineers of what we are doing at the moment, his book on the Lock-Out has been out of print and we have now printed a small number of them and they on sale here for €20 or £17 and I just want you to know that they are selling on e-bay for over €300 so I am suggesting that you all buy one, ok, and put it away and in about five years' time or maybe ten years' time it may be worth a lot of money, ok.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Sally Anne, very enlightening. Can I now put the EC Report, Section 4, Section 5 and Appendices 1-7 to the you for agreement – everyone agreed? Agreed, thank you. Before we move on to the next session can I just make an announcement to you and I say this again before we close, that the floor of this hall including the balcony will be cleared by the cleaners after our session this evening so anything you leave behind will be binned and dumped so take your conference papers with you and papers that you feel you want to hold on to, otherwise they will just be disposed of.

Tuesday 2 July, 2013

Afternoon Session – Commission on Trade Unions

(Private Session)

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Can I now move on to the second element of our afternoon's Private Session. I am calling on the General Secretary, David Begg to introduce the debate on this matter and one again there is going to be another PowerPoint presentation.

David Begg, General Secretary

I was just saying to Phil there how useless I am on technology and without Natalie now I would be lost completely but any first of all as you will probably notice, we have been joined on the platform by Phil Jennings, the General Secretary of the Uni-Global Union. Phil is the Chair of the Trade Union Commission, together with his former colleague, Philip Bowyer, they have given us an enormous amount of time over the last few years. They have always been available to travel to Ireland and have always been willing to give us their wisdom and their insights in trying to grapple with this matter, so I am very pleased Phil to be able to welcome you and thank you for coming from Geneva to be with us. Phil will be speaking after me.

Ok, well there is this report before you colleagues so I hope you have had an opportunity to look at it. Really it is essentially in three parts. First of all it reports on the proceedings of our last conference in Killarney where we had consideration of the report 'Call to Action' and the positions which were made at that conference are reported on to the extent which they have been implemented. Quite a lot of work has been done on them as you will see. The other two parts of it are, first of all to outline a paper which was presented to the conference – a Special Conference which was held in Clane last September on the future of the trade union movement overall and finally then a paper which reflects on some of the decisions which were made at that conference and how they can be taken forward. It is important probably to say that you don't really have to accept this report but there is a real challenge for us and what I am attempting to put before you today is more in the nature of a concept than a sort of blueprint for the future. But it is quite an interesting concept I think and one of the good things about the Clane conference was that people were willing to take a bit of a risk and to try to take this idea forward. And maybe I should just relate to you how this all came about. In fact there were two conversations which took us on the pathway to produce this particular document. The first took place in Jury's Hotel with Phil, Philip Bowyer and myself immediately after one of the meetings of the Trade Union Commission and we were talking about how can we go forward and we were looking at different ideas but we were really talking about incremental change. And, Phil made the point to me – he said at some point you guys are going to have to decide what you really want to do in the future. He said well we can help you – we can take you so far but we can't really do the thing for you completely. You are going to have to get your feet wet yourselves and come up with what suits you here in your particular situation that nobody from outside can really give an off the shelf solution to these issues. And, the second conversation took place at the Implementation Group that I mentioned – that was the group that was established after BDC2011 to take the thing forward – and again we were looking at the different parts and saying well you could do this, that and the other and all of these are good things to do. They tighten up the organisation and they get

synergies in different respects but really we are not grappling with the fundamental deep down issues that we have to face for the future. And so we had a debate about that and the debate kind of concentrated on look, you know, how much is acceptable? I mean what would people buy in to? If we put forward very radical proposals will they just completely throw the thing out and not engage with it but on the other hand if we bring these incremental proposals well, you know, to use a famous expression that Jack O'Connor used, we have a great capacity to make the right decisions five minutes after it is too late to make them. We were quite influenced by that and so we decided in entering into the Clane discussions, that look we will put out an idea and see how it runs with people – see how what they think. And we did - this basic concept that I am going to talk about today. And, actually the interesting thing if you were there at that particular discussion, the interesting thing was that people did sort to say yes this is different, because peoples' feelings up to that point were that, look this is more of the same but this idea is different and maybe we can look at it and maybe we can do it. But, look, the point about is that it is a concept and again I stress this point – it is not a blueprint. I can't answer the question precisely how it will work out for your union in the future. It is a bit of a journey that we have to go on. So, the question really is for us today is whether we can embark on that journey with some confidence that we can get to the right place at the end of the day.

So I am going to go through seven or eight slides – it won't take too long hopefully – but just to kind to really recap I think on some of the issues that we want to look at. So if you look at how is the economic crisis affecting us? Well, look we all know that unemployment facilitates exploitation of people. The individualisation of employment, low wages, and minimum hours contracts – all of these things. We can see it in our workplaces that the world of work is changing before us every day in subtle and not so subtle ways but it is a different world from which most of us grew in. And, you see the whole emergence of a precariate – a group of people who are facing employment situations which gives them no security and a tenuous link to the labour market, and whereas in the past education was always a guarantee against that sort of thing, it is no longer true that that is the case.

The second point is that we see a lack of social investment. There are huge problems with pensions and insecurity, failed market solutions to issues like childcare and care of the elderly, and intense pressures arising from this lack of social infrastructure for young parents. The social wage which we have always maintained was as much a part of the basic remuneration of people as was the money they got into their hands. But all of this is being done on completely the wrong basis. We see ourselves surrounded with a huge problem of sovereign and personal debt and the need for savings in each house which is crucifying domestic demand and hitting jobs in a kind of a vicious circle. And it all results in a stagnant economy which can't get the escape velocity to kind of pull out of this morass in which we are in basically. This is the way that economic conditions affect the employment challenge for us.

Now, let's have a look at what I would call the different fronts of the battle. And, the President referred to this this morning, I think Joe referred to it as well and a number of speakers, but let's try and concentrate on what they are – the challenges facing us at present. And, basically to be honest the war that is being waged against us. A few times people talked this morning about the class war and a lot of people intuitively reacted a little bit against that, but the fact of the matter is that it is very hard to find a more accurate way of describing what is happening just at the moment. And if you try to move around that diagram in an anti-clockwise direction that first circle there I have – the international capital mobility and what that involves – the sheer power of capital, the fact that at the touch of a button it can move around the world, the fact that capital can demand conditions for its investment, the fact that in any relationship of the markets – you can look at labour markets, you can look at markets for goods and services and you can look at capital markets – but there is a hierarchy

and capital markets are at the very top. Because, if you are selling goods and services and you are in a strike with your employees, well at some stage you have to resolve the strike because you have to sell your goods. It's the same way if you are a worker, eventually you have to resolve the dispute because you would just simply starve otherwise, but the difference that separates out capital markets is that they basically don't have to invest. They can hold off investing. There isn't the same pressure there. So we have a new hierarchy structure of international capitalism which I mentioned this morning is replicated to some extent in the period between 1870 and 1914 but has come back with a vengeance basically and is huge pressure for us and we see our country at the moment trying to compete with others for foreign direct investment for which you have to allow this regulatory arbitrage chest they call it, the fact that these companies can demand that we don't want a regulated labour market, we don't want to pay tax, we don't want to be forced to comply with any particular set of rules because we have investment power and if you don't accommodate us we are just going to take it somewhere else. So there is a huge battlefront that we are facing at the moment.

The second is really related to that to a degree. It is an ideological attack on the public sector. Now on the face of it, austerity makes no sense. We had the discussion this morning where we discussed why would people carry on austerity in circumstances where the evidence against it is so compelling. But, looked at from another perspective it makes sense to these people because they are trying to reform the world in an image that suits them an awful lot better. They want to reduce the role of Government in society. They want to transfer huge amounts of work from the public sector into the private sector through outsourcing and privatisation and by any other means that they can do it. So, by the time that this whole process is finished we will be in a completely reordered world which the power of capital will even be much stronger than it is at the moment.

The third point down is welfare regime sustainability. You see if you undermine the basis of work you undermine welfare stability as well because with changing demographics in the world – the fact that we are all getting older, that is a sort of totality I suppose, but people are living longer and they require more provision in their old age. And, this change puts a bigger demand on health care costs and pension costs and just simply the welfare system in itself and it can only really be sustainable in conditions of full employment. And full employment for good jobs where people can afford to pay the taxes that will support the welfare state – that has been attacked. And that is another fundamental for us – I mean workers work for money but they also work so that they can be in a position to pay their taxes, to pay their social insurance and be able to be looked after when they are old or sick or whatever.

So, now, let's go up to the top circle on the other side and move around in a clockwise direction. The solution was proposed as part of the present crisis under EMU is an internal wage devaluation for purposes of competitiveness. Now, I dealt with that this morning, the fact that everybody is trying to be competitive obviously becomes self-defeating unless you have some markets externally to planet. But, nevertheless that is the drive – internal wage devaluation to achieve that. It is a huge point of attack. It is a huge battle front for us. Deriving from that to some extent is the wage determination system and essentially there are two poles of wage determination in advance of industrial societies. One is based on corporatist structures where collective social pacts are negotiated separately centrally between employers and trade unions and Governments but the other is a kind of a market clearing wage system where the free market determines the level of wages. It is a concept which theoretically holds that there should be no unemployment because if people worked for the wage available everybody would have a job – it's a pile of rubbish obviously – but people do actually believe in it on the right of politics and drive that particular agenda very much. It is very much part of what we are looking at this moment. And then derived again

from that, again something which is immediately plain to us, is the dismantling of the institutions of collective bargaining. The extent to which since the onset of the crisis – there can be no coincidence in this – that we have seen the striking down of in the Republic of the 2001 and 2004 Industrial Relations Act and more recently large elements of the 1946 Industrial Relations Act relating to Registered Employment Agreements and Joint Labour Committees, and this is all designed to push us back into that middle circle there where the wage system is purely the market that decides everything.

So, that takes us to the last one there which is the question of ideas. This indeed is the battle of ideas. The biggest conflict that we are facing at the moment and it is an interesting point listening to the discussion this morning that after 30 odd years Mick O'Reilly and myself have both arrived at the same point so that there must be some convergence going on. But seriously in the last paragraph of the general theory that was Keynes' ideas which were dangerous in the long run and that is absolutely true. This is where the battle is being fought out. So this is what we have to challenge all of us together and it is a fairly formidable challenge I think when you see it all laid out like that.

So, are we capable of fending off all of these attacks in our current state? Well look at some of the facts. I mean by the way I am not going through the report – at your leisure you can look in to the report with you today. There are various arguments about the state of the world, some which you will agree with depending on your political perspective, others you won't. But, let's pick out a few crucial questions. The first is that we have 48 affiliated unions and 3 with associate status. Now that for a pretty small membership of around 800,000 people – that is a huge kind of spreading of our resources and our capabilities. We had a situation recently where we had 19 unions in the public service in the Republic engaged in bilateral talks because we couldn't sustain a collective approach. Now, I don't want to get in to why that is the case, but nevertheless if we stand back from it and say objectively that does not reflect well on our abilities to organise ourselves. Also we have no presence in significant economic sectors in the country. We have the duplication of the resource and we have weak coordination due to what should be a loose confederate structure in the ICTU. For example, it has proved to be impossible to agree on a common organising initiative. I remember when we were in Belfast last Peter McLoone was the President and Peter's main initiative was we should try to do something centrally to harness all the energies to organise those people, those sectors of the economy where people are not organised but we couldn't manage to do it. And last I would say that not a few of our unions are in a very debilitated state at the moment largely because of changes in economic conditions but you get a sense that if there was a strong gust of wind some of them might blow over.

Now, conceptually what might be a new union movement look like in outline and this is really the slide that we presented to people at the Clane Conference. First of all that it should have a federal rather than a confederal structure and that means really that in a confederal structure is a very loose organisation that you can only move at the pace of the weakest member more or less of your group. Confederal structure would involve much more centralising authority and I will come back to that in a second.

The second point is that it would have a sectoral organisation structure. You would agree on what the important sectors of the economy were, say it could be the public service, it could be manufacturing, it could be building and construction, you might even decide that you needed sectors within the public service say between health and education. This is a choice that you make exactly where you decide where the sectors should be. And the point to come back to about the power structure is that there should be an appropriate balance of power between the centre and the sectors. In other words that we would practice the concept of subsidiarity,

that you would make decisions as close as possible to the members being affected by those decisions. Again that is something for discussion and working out a right balance.

The next point is that you should try to have centralised shared services. We should try to do things on organising centrally if we can, we should do it on procurement, we should do it on investment, we should do it on pensions, we should do it on purchasing of one sort or another. All of these things that we separately like buying legal advice for instance from a whole range of different sources. There is a huge number of things that we could do together. A good bit of work was done by Joe O'Flynn and his committee trying to do an audit of unions as to what our resources were and what purchasing we were making and we have a good picture from that, better than we had before. And the last thing is a cohesion fund and what is that? A cohesion fund is a fund which recognises that if you do seriously want to make a transition to a different structure in the future you cannot do that without dealing with the problems with what that creates principally for individuals who are affected by it. We are not in the business of doing down any person that works for us, we have to look after everybody and we have to have a fund to do that at the end of the day. And, quite frankly if you don't have that anyway from just a pure politics point of view that everybody who sees themselves as being adversely affected by the arrangement will possibly oppose it. They would have to in their own interest. So we want to take out of the equation any negatives for individual people and the way to do that is to leverage all of those assets that we have to try to ensure that we have a fund which allows us to look after people.

Now, one possible model that we can look at – as I say it is a possible model – you don't have to buy this exclusively but there are reasons why it is interesting from our point of view and for the purpose of advancing the concept I think it is worth looking at and that is the Dutch Socialist Confederation of Trade Unions, FNV. The FNV in Bondgenoten, if that is how you pronounce it, I don't know, but what that means by the way is FNV on the Move, that is what that means when you translate the Dutch, the only bit of Dutch I know. Now, the thing about the Netherlands is that it is a small open economy like our own. It has 16 million of a population, more than our own. It has a lower union density actually than Ireland at 1.2 million overall for that population but it has a much stronger corporatist tradition than we have. For years the Dutch have had what they call the Polder Model which is kind of an advanced type of social partnership that exists and there are institutions in the Dutch economy such as the Federation of Labour and the Social & Economic Foundation which are geared towards underpinning that institutional framework, the most significant of which is the Federation of Labour which is a very effective body on the whole. In the Dutch FNV structure there are four large and fifteen smaller unions. The largest has 480,000 members and is the product itself of a merger of about four mergers to bring it up to that particular number. Interesting enough at FNV Bondgenoten, they actually feel themselves at this stage that a single union has become, as a union singly too large. They see there is a need to do something about that structure. The smallest union is 600 members and that is the Footballers Association in the Netherlands. The new structure which is being put in place at the moment by FNV came out of a crisis. There are about two years ahead of us actually in terms of implementing all of this and the crisis arose from a falling out internally over pensions between the central confederation and some of the individual unions and the whole thing more or less basically imploded. So they came at restructuring or redesigning, rebuilding their confederation from the ground up through necessity. Now if we do something we do it with less pressure because we have a choice in what we might do. Now the principles of what the FNV idea is built on is first of all using power effectively in the interest of members and of a better society is the first principle. The second is of organising new members – people that are employed, people that are unemployed or as they put it – people that have a job, people who are looking for a job, people who are self-employed or just sole traders. The third principle is to be close to the members and close to power at both local, national and EU level. The next principle is the

empowerment of members, to structure the thing so that members feel very involved and very empowered by their involvement in the Federation. And, the last of the principles is that big unions respect small unions, that there is no dominance within the structure. The structure itself which is involved is a Federal structure organised on a network sectoral basis. I have a little diagram which we can look at in a minute which might give you a better idea of all this, but it is the whole business of just again something I mentioned earlier on, that you would organise the union structure in sectors be it manufacturing or public sector or construction or whatever you choose or retail perhaps, but that you do it on a sectoral basis. But the sectors themselves are networked. Now what would be an ideal of that. I think, let's say suppose you decided in our case that you would have the sectors as health and education and local authority in the public service for instance. You can see how they would be individual sectors but you would need to network them because they have one employer and there are common interests between them all. So this is kind of the concept at least. Now, this is the interesting thing – the big unions in this – the four big unions will actually disappear completely and their members will become direct members of the Federation – the FNV Federation and the twelve unions who are smaller will engage at sectoral level but they don't change their structure. In other words that the members remain members of the particular union but they participate directly in the sectoral structure and ultimately the idea is that the names will change in time. They won't be the individual union names but they will be FNV Railways, FNV Health, FNV Construction and things of that nature. Now, in terms of the governance of the whole thing there is an idea for a Members' Parliament which will be elected by sectoral constituencies with one member elected by about 8,000 Federation members and the President would be directly elected by members, just the ordinary members of the union, and the Executive Council is elected by the Parliament and there is also an Audit Committee and a temporary Transitional Council. The Audit Committee's function is to ensure that the Executive Committee is implementing the directions of policy decided on by the Parliament and the Transitional Council seems to be essentially designed to ensure that the transition from what they are now to what they will ultimately be happens in accordance with the agreements which each individual union signed up to who wanted to participate in this.

Now, I don't know how clear this will be – you can see some if there now. You can see there the different sectors in green, in brown and in blue and you can see the idea there of networking across – wherever there is a connection between the different sectors there is a networking structure which would apply. And, these people would elect the Members' Parliament from each sector constituency on the basis of one per 8,000 and the President would be elected directly, the Executive Committee and the General Committee from the Parliament from the Audit Committee, as I said, overseeing what is done there to make sure that the Executive Committee is performing as it is supposed to be based on the instructions it gets from the Parliament and the Transitional Council then to ensure that the whole thing is working well. Now that is a very busy slide but unfortunately that's the biggest we could actually get from them in English. We can't make it any bigger but it will kind of give you an idea about the way in which the thing is intended to work. Obviously if we are going to go ahead with this in the future we will develop all of this structure for you in much more detail. But again to recap on it – the idea is that the organisation is in sectors, they are undivided and independent. In addition to the sectors' organisation and network, Members' Parliament is the most important body, to strengthen the role of the members and active trade unionists and trade union workers, increase the focus at local level by the establishment of trade union houses meaning local headquarters in particular areas and a directly elected President.

So, the next steps if you are willing to take this journey would be to go about the business of drafting a Constitution or Articles of Association, FNV call their Constitution 'Articles of Association'. Obviously we would have a consultation period associated with that followed by a Special Conference at which we would or wouldn't endorse the terms of the

Constitution/Articles of Association and after that we would need an information campaign and some way of branding the values of the new trade union movement that we were launching and we would try and do the whole thing in a five year transition in different phases. It is at least a medium term project to be achieved. And if you take it that we have been more or less five years at this already, we can't be accused of rushing into anything. So these are possibilities. The President made quite an important point in his speech earlier this morning when he said, look you are now at this point being asked to do anything irrevocable and that is absolutely true but I think equally to be fair, that if we decide to go along with this to some extent there is a bit of a crossing of the Rubicon. We wouldn't be committed to anything definite but we would be on a journey which would end up with a movement which is quite different to what it is at the moment. Now I freely admit that I don't believe this to be maybe the best solution of all, it is one concept. It has the advantage for us that a country with a not dissimilar structure is doing something similar, that it is being watched by other countries. Other trade union movements in Europe are about two years ahead of us and we can learn from any mistakes that they might make in effecting the transition. So there is a kind of a safety valve built in to it in that way, but it is a very big move for us, there is no doubt about that. I recognise that but on the other hand, just consider for a minute what will happen if we don't attempt to do something fairly radical? Now, I mean I don't think the world will end to be honest, I don't see that as a possibility at all and I think we will carry on as we are in some respects. There are real dangers there. I suspect that a number of unions for defensive reasons will eventually engage in mergers but the problem is that gives us a result that is not thought out. It is done for the wrong reasons, for defensive reasons, for the exigencies of the situation that union in particular situations are confronting, whereas we have a choice to try and design a model which is not a defensive model but a model which gives us the power and the influence a) to recruit people because it is attractive to them, that they see as being very effective in the economy and to try to get change in the economy and society in a way that it has never been possible for us to do before. There is a risk in it all and the key thing is that whatever we do we can't split our organisation. That is the key – we can't end up out of this with three trade union centres let's say, that is not on. If that is going to happen we need to abandon the thing - that would be the worst of all worlds. But, on the other hand, we need to take some element of risk I think because the prize is quite significant. We have seen with the Nevin Institute if we do some things creatively we can have a very good result, so why don't we actually take a little bit more risk and do a little bit more. I think if we can show some further progress, our members will be delighted by success. They are very appreciative generally when you manage to make good gain and that will give them confidence, a confidence to become more involved and to build for ourselves a stronger movement. We are in a safe place now where we are all very demoralised. We are facing enormous challenges, as I say. We have to be able to combat those challenges but the key to combatting those challenges in many ways is building confidence for members for this new movement which I think in this little island we can do very good things for workers with. So, thanks for your attention.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Just before I call Philip to address us, he was introduced by David to it, I was part of the Commission who was hounded by him because he didn't come across to assist us, he came across to bully us into actually getting up and doing something. In some ways he was very like my last General Secretary in my own union, he wanted to know why you didn't do it yesterday and that's the situation we found ourselves in with the Commission. Can I also say if Peter McLoone was about this morning, then all five of the people who were on that Commission are here, Peter is the only one who is absent at the moment. So, in that sense you have got the people that you bullied into kind of doing something Philip and hopefully we have delivered something. Can I call you Philip to address us – you don't have a power point presentation? We are pleased to hear that.

Philip Jennings, Chair of Commission on Trade Union Organisation

Sorry to come over so retro and doing a PowerPoint this afternoon.

Dear Colleagues, President, General Secretary, I really want to thank you for the invitation to address you today. It is a great privilege and honour. I am delighted to be back in Belfast. The last time I was in Belfast it was November and I have to say it looks just the same today. I am from Cardiff so I must say it feels like home and I congratulate you on the choice of venue. It does feel a little bit like the old chapel in the Welsh valleys, so it is time I hope for a bit of fire and bit of brimstone, a bit of Gospel to try and get this trade union movement of ours to stay strong, to reconnect with the Irish people and to send a strong as possible message to the Anglo-Irish Bank and their boys and that they are not going to take us for fools again. Here we are a century after the 1913 Lock-Out with a continually strong trade union movement and that is one of my messages to you. 800,000, or almost 800,000 should change, do what the Swiss accountants do, they keep pushing back the dates of their final accounts to keep the goods news alive. A continually strong trade union movement but still has the courage and the imagination to say that we recognise these strengths but it is time to consider how we reshape, reconnect and recreate this great movement of yours. And, let me say also congratulations to you because there are not many trade union centres in the world that can claim that they have a majority of their members as women, congratulations to all of you in the Women's Committee.

Now, I was completely sober, Wales had just won the Grand Slam again, and I was visited by David and Jack and I eagerly stepped in. I was excited to accept the challenge egged on by Stevie Fitzpatrick and John Douglas and Larry of IBOA. I have eagerly accepted this task to chair the Commission's work in the first stage which resulted in this 'Call to Action' at your last conference in 2011. Now what struck me was what were the sentiments, what were the feelings that we had at this sort of institutional exercise. I couldn't find anybody who said that what we are doing and the structure that we had is the best possible solution. There was a sense of urgency, there was a sense of restlessness. Clearly it was two years into the crisis – a movement that was being battered and bruised and hammered by those that put you in the crisis in the first place. But one thing that stuck me was a recognition that standing still was not the answer. Indeed, when I tried to be diplomatic, which is extremely difficult for a council estate boy from the Llanramnau area of Cardiff to be. I was reprimanded by the Executive for going too slowly, for leaving too many options open, that we should be more determined in laying out the blueprint for the future. I was excited, I was impressed that in the profound depths of an economic crisis where financial capitalism that brought the world and the Irish economy to its knees, this great movement of yours had the guts to say now is the time to decide how we organise to where the future storms and how we move forward. This is about moving forward. The task to ensure how the trade union movement, the strongest pillar of Irish civil society in Ireland is strengthened to fight for the common good of all the Irish people. My task today then is to encourage further momentum in this process and everything that that means. And also to bring the sad news, the difficult news that we have to face up to the reality that good times are not around the corner for the national, the European or the global economy. The external environment is menacing, it is threatening. Someone said to me 'but Philip, there has to be a light at the end of the tunnel'. I said, 'my friend it is a train coming towards you and it is known as the 'Merkel 2 Express' and the guy on guard duty is George Bloody Osborne. Serious, I am trying to relate to you the changes that are taking place in the union movement elsewhere that you don't feel that it is just you that is tackling this change. This generation of union leaders are members who have to face up to a new world, a new reality and facing up to it they are.

I must say, a few years on and we still have a road to travel to meet the task in hand. But I recognise also that individual unions themselves have been innovative, developed new services, Stevie Fitzpatrick has a new Education Emporium for the benefit of his members and all you, I know John Douglas has been putting organising programmes in place, I know other unions are talking about their own cohesion with other unions. Innovations are taking place with reconnecting with members, new services, new organisers and new talks of more cohesion. But what nags at us all and nags in this process of the Commission, is do we have the resources at the ICTU to get the job done and what nags continuously at all us is, is do we have the structure to get the job done. I think we have more miles to travel.

The 'Call to Action' reasoning was clear as David mentioned. It was not too opt for the big bang – an immediate structural reform – but a commitment to trigger a process of change through dialogue. We wanted to open a path. We wanted to reassure but without retreating into pacificity. I played rugby for many years. I was used to passing the ball and I know that in some point in the conversation it looked like I was passing the ball back to you to say, look the future is in your hands, we can guide and learn from other experience but you also have to take responsibility. Some felt the Call to Action should have been more structurally deterministic and came up with a new template where we tried to squeeze people in, new divisions of union labour if you like. And it was said that relying on enabling mechanisms promoting a process of change through dialogue would result in a state of well, we will stay as we are. And of course they had a point. Likewise some may have thought well, this is all going to go away. It has not and it will not. My message today then is for you to recommit to the task to work with the Executive Committee resolution which is before you, to pursue the Call to Action with the enabling motion before you. I think it gives you institutional rigour, a new emphasis to continue the path of change. The proposals are ambitious yet they are based on the reassurance that change is based on triggering a new round of dialogue, dialogue with a goal to be met in five years. And, I ask you, I appeal to you to take this initiative and to fully engage. I believe that the path of change is an imperative for you. The environment in which we are working is menacing – it will not wait for us. As I said, there are no good times around the corner. Brutal, raw, tooth and nail market thinking is in revival. The environment is aggressive, it shows no signs of immediate improvement. Austerity is not working but they carry on just the same. There is no point saying it can't happen to us – it can. Our detractors have the power, the means and above all the will to marginalise and delegitimise our leadership and our members with the aim of extinguishing its power and its influence. We have to be bold and dogged in our resistance. My American trade union friends now tell me that they now feel like a resistance movement and yet you have to be courageous and creative in adapting your trade union movement and not just here in Ireland as we face these challenges elsewhere.

Now, in the midst of that crisis in 2008 and 2009 there was a kind of a halleluiah – the neo-liberal economic model has collapsed, that anyone that stands up and says the market knows best should have been rushed off to the asylum. There was feeling of a new dawn in progressive thinking and action. Instead of the defeat of that idea we have seen our enemies come back with even more audacity, with more balls to announce what would have been previously unthinkable in terms of union social and labour policy. It is more than business as usual. This is targeted, this is real, this is global, our adversaries mean business, and I say to the ICTU, we have to be ready for this fight. Look at that kind fluffy idea of the Social Europe that we had. The European Union desire is to cut unit labour costs to make us more competitive – that's the narrative. It is probably easy enough to understand and to relate to but the reality behind that narrative is a single minded pursuit by the Troika, by the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund to destroy collective bargaining, to destroy industrial relations' structures which were built in the post-war settlements. And, it has to be known that no, we won't tolerate this.

I am telling you – no one understands what the bloody hell the Troika is. It sounds like a horse in the Irish Derby – it is a dark horse with an ECB driving a process to put us out of business. They are taking a wrecking ball to labour relations structures. My organisation UNI-Europa has set up a Troika Watch because people didn't believe what is going on. Go to our website and you will see it – Troika Watch. Every day we are looking, examining and illustrating the evil side of this Troika austerity project. It is nothing about bringing back an economic prosperity; it is about changing the rules of the game to disable you and this movement from being able to negotiate decent work in the workplace. Collective bargaining, the right to strike, the right to organise, the welfare state as we know it and the merciless and continuous assault all presented as a barrier to modern capital. And, just when you think it can't get any worse another thunder of neo-liberal economic rubble falls on our head. We represent people in public services broadcasting – they closed the Greek public broadcaster three weeks ago with no notice, no negotiation – 3,000 people thrown in the street. That wasn't on anybody's thinking. The agenda is clear brothers and sisters – to put us out of business, to shut down our airways.

In the United States of America they set out to wipe out the trade union movement in the private sector. It signalled the end of the post-war New Deal. When we look at the 60s and early 70s the union density in the private sector, collective bargaining coverage was similar to yours. It has taken four decades but today the level of collective bargaining coverage in the world's number one economy in the private sector is 6 per cent. Now the target is the public sector. With that entire crisis taking place in the States over the right to work. The leader of the pack, and John Douglas knows him well, is Walmart – the world's largest private sector employer. Why do you think we as UNI-Global Union stands up and try and give this organisation a bloody nose because they will not recognise trade unions or collective bargaining. We have tried to build a grassroots movement in the United States of America with our sister unions the USCW. They have taken to the streets as you have seen. Last week they took to the streets again. The response of Walmart is to dismiss 100 of those poorly paid, vulnerable workers because they took this action. ICTU, you say no to Walmart, you say no to this type of corporate behaviour. They have a National Labour Relations Board paralysed and now the US Chamber of Commerce, which is a global organisation in its own right, they are not just interested in accountants and businesses in California and New York State, they have a global reach. Now they are saying that captive meetings – you know what I mean when the supervisor brings you into a room, the union organiser is knocking on the door, when he is trying to convince people that he or she can join a union and then we get the union busters – the legal intervention, the appeals, the captive audience meetings where the people are told you join – you are out. Now the Chamber of Commerce is saying what, they are saying that this kind of union busting is freedom of speech. And, now what is happening and we are challenging this, but it is coming to a cinema near you, we are challenging this and what they are saying is that freedom of speech is compatible with freedom of association and the ILO conventions. Now what does that mean if they succeed? That means you legitimise union busting planetary wise, that you have the key UN institution – the only place where trade unions have a seat at the table, all of a sudden can legitimise this anti-union activity. And, we know from the private services sector that if you can't get in the door and have an opportunity in a sort of a neutral way to talk to potential members, we know that we are in big trouble. We are fighting this manoeuvre at the International Labour Organisation but it is a battle.

I see no prospect of immediate improvement then in the general environment. I look at the world in the big picture. There are 3 billion people at work. There are 1.7 billion people who have no contract whatsoever, no formal contract, precarious work, insecure work. In the

formal economy, 200 million people are unemployed – one in eight of all young people are out of a job. We see collective bargaining slowly collapsing in many, many nations. The share of wages and the wealth produced of a nation in pure decline. Our societies are growing apart and inequality and distribution of income is at a level that we have not seen since the 1920s and at the same time you find these elite political, business, financial and their friends in the media and the politicians placing the blame for the decline on the most vulnerable on the working classes of our nation. It is for us to take a stand – we can and we must. And I congratulate all of you for not giving up and despite all the odds you have maintained your membership strength and density. This is a significant achievement. There are few trade union movements that have had to face the economic and social prices that the Republic of Ireland have endured. I know that you have common cause with your sisters and brothers in Portugal, in Greece, in Italy and in Spain. And it is more than sobering to recognise the crushing events since 2008 – six austerity budgets, 660,000 jobs lost and 28 billion euros extracted from the economy. And, yet, here you are today still close to 800,000 strong. A remarkable achievement and a credit to you all. My appeal is and continues to be is the structure that got us here today will I fear not be enough to win the battles of today and tomorrow. And all of this in the Republic of Ireland where there is no legally recognised right to collective bargaining, to organise and to represent people at the place of work 100 years on. This has to change. I have done the research and I have discovered that Ryan Air does not fly to Switzerland and Ryan Air does not fly to Geneva. I ask myself why? Because it is the human and trade union capital of the world. We don't want Ryan Air in Geneva. We don't want the message that Mr what's his name, O'Leary brings to this discussion. And, I enjoy the TV show Mrs Browne's Boys. My message to Mr O'Leary is 'feck off'. To me that it is clear and I told the Director General of the ILO, he is a friend of mine, that the Republic of Ireland for all the fun on me and friendship that surrounded it with his friends from Ireland, that the Republic of Ireland is in breach of ILO Standard – it is time you had the right to collective bargaining in the Republic of Ireland.

I don't know how many more kitchen sinks can be thrown at you from the Troika to the Supreme Court but here we are today still close to 800,000 strong. A wonderful and a brilliant platform. I have referred to the aggression of the national and global environment but we also all of us realise that that world of work is changing and a new labour market is emerging. New kinds of businesses are emerging, new kinds of jobs, new occupations, new professions, new business models and new emphasises on knowledge, adaptability, new flexibility leading to precarity and insecurity in short, a new world of work. And what really disturbs me in all of this change presented to working people as challenges which are beyond our control or reach i.e. that we have nothing to say and nothing to add to improving the state of play in this new world of work. This feeds a cancerous characterisation of our movement as no longer being relevant with no credible answer to the contemporary world. We are not seen as part of a solution. You can't help me, I can do this alone, this slow dribble down aiming to erode our legitimacy and confidence. That is why the Call to Action emphasised that we are also in a communication battle. You know all of the American think-tanks dress themselves up as being respectable organisations that do intense research. They spend 40% of their income on communications, marketing and messaging. Now I ask all of you as I ask my own organisation, how much do we spend? Are we spending 40 in every 100 euro on a communications plan? What are we doing in terms of the messaging we are doing? I know it is not enough in itself but you must persevere with your work here. So it is clear that the working people and the trade union movement have been the collateral damage of this process of globalisation but something is stirring out there. Something is stirring. There is a backlash growing. People are more and more aware of the social damage that this is causing. The top five global risks identified in 2013 by the World Economic Forum were the potential for growing social unrest, the collapse in social cohesion because of growing income inequality. I feel that that backlash could grow. The assault on you and us are taking people

to the brink. Something snapped in the Arab Spring, something snapped with the Occupy Movement, something snapped in Turkey, something snapped in Brazil. So let us be clear – to build a common good our message to our political enemies as much as to our political allies is to build that common good and social cohesion, you need a strong united trade union movement for quality jobs, justice, dialogue, equality and social protection floor for housing, education and health. It might sound a bit old school but this is what makes the quality of our societies and communities. The market will not deliver this and any politician stands up and says the market knows best, that venture capital and hedge funds – where are the teachers in this room – that when this Minister for Education talks about hedge funds, venture capitalists, running the education system, this guy doesn't deserve anybody's confidence and even less anybody's vote. Its bonkers – the market economy bought this place to its knees.

Ok, so, we are the firewall against these excesses. We are the firewall for our members and the citizens of this proud island. And lets agree that we can do something about this. We are not to be fatalistic and say, I can't do something about this. The minute that we in this room have our own self-confidence sapped, that we feel somehow overwhelmed, that it is all too much, that it is a time for us to take a stand. And let's say that we are not satisfied with being 800,000, let's have a plan that says we will be a million strong, why not, why not Conference, why not? I have spoken to unions and they have said that they are trying to keep their head above water. We will be happier if we don't lose this year. This mentality is changing, there needs more ambition out there.

Now in the Call to Action we talk about sector groups bringing eight sectors together to have a discussion, not to take the time of day but to bring a plan to bring density in each of the sectors. Let's agree a plan to build the density. We know where our weaknesses are, we know of the 100 million resources in the sector that it can be applied to places where we can grow. Let's agree to focus on those sectors where we can grow that density. Let's agree to get a resourced organising plan not just a recruitment to build our power. Let's agree this motion that gives us impetus to that process. Unions are committing to change all around us. I am the General Secretary of UNI Global. We brought four organisations together, four Presidents, four General Secretaries, four Executives, four head offices, four print shops, four communications experts and so on and so forth. This year in the manufacturing sector IndustriALL celebrates its first anniversary. They were manufacturing, they were oil & chemical and textiles – three organisations, three Presidents, three General Secretaries, three head offices and so on and so forth. Today, and I know this kind of planetary bubble that we are working is different from the reality that you face, but nevertheless a short time ago there were seven individual international organisations, today there are two. Our members told us that they wanted it. The unions said that we are affiliating to seven different organisations – this doesn't make sense to us. So we met the challenge so now what I do is that I hold that mirror back to them. And, all I can say that the point was that this was not a take-over either in industriAll or UNI Global union by one group or another. We said from the outset that we were doing something new, that we were building something new, that we were building a new structure giving a new density to our sectors where we organise and negotiate. We build within a new capacity staff and resources. We changed our constitution to have a 40 per cent gender representation rule. We established even at our level an organising fund. We have organising projects in all regions and in 70 different companies where we are trying to make a difference. We are cooperating together UNI Global and IndustriALL. Our first test was Bangladesh. You all recall on April 24th when that factory collapsed when 1,200 people lost their lives. We had been in negotiations for one year for a new deal for the factory safety. It did not work. We made an ultimatum, and I am very pleased to say that as a result of that ultimatum, we have 70 global retail plans that have signed up not to their Accord but to our Accord which almost 2 million and 1,000 factories who have signed this are now covered by this new agreement. A significant accomplishment and a step to end the race to the bottom. It

shows you what cooperation can do and we are doing this further in the supply chain with the ITF.

I have many things to say what is going on in other countries but time does not permit but I just want you to take me at my word, that everywhere in all continents unions are facing up to the change whether you are in an emerging market or whether you are in a mature industrialised market. From South Africa, from Brazil, Argentina, Japan and elsewhere in Europe everyone is facing up to what works. We need to adapt, we need to change. David spoke about the FNV, David called and explained what happened and the message that came back to me was don't wait for the crisis, take things in your hands. Building reform in the crisis that we were faced with was not the best way of going about it. The largest affiliated of UNI Global, Verde, it has taken them time to find their feet, at last we begin to see change. This year, the first three months of the year, they signed up 80,000 new members in three months and congratulations to them. EG Metal, the world's largest independent democratic union in Germany, they decided two years ago that they were not longer going to accept decline. They completely reorganised their work, restructured, decentralised, invested in organising and for the first time we have seen this year an increase in their membership. In Canada in just a couple of weeks' time, the automobile workers, the CAW and the electricians and the paper workers will be coming together to call a new organisation Uniform.

So, you have taken steps here. You have tried to plug the economic capacity gap. You have found the means. You have assembled the talent and now you have the Nevin Economic Research Institute. I believe it has made its presence felt to get this alternative out. I think that is worth a round of applause for goodness sake, this is an excellent initiative. I know also there has been good work taking place for a new Workers' College and we have to find a space there honestly to get some social responsibility in to the Anglo Irish world of management on this island. So, improvements in communications, developing an economic alternative, improving workers' education – all good stuff but I believe more needs to be done. The motion before you gives you that possibility. I don't see it as a leap in the dark. I don't see it as a leap of faith. It is a leap in the right direction. It talks about strong local infrastructures to give proximity to the members. It talks about shared services. It reinforces the sectoral initiatives that have been launched. It calls for those sectors to build organising and collective bargaining strategies. It calls for the sectors to imagine a scenario of sector unity and identity. Just imagine what it could look like. You can be the General Secretary that goes to the sector meetings but try and construct something. What does it look like and what the implications are. It is a time as David said to take a risk but to make a profound analysis to get in to the discussion. It calls for a new constitution, it calls for a new capacity with a cohesion fund and it recognises that time is required and that a five year transition period is underlined. I know that the characteristics of the ICTU are unique. You are needed to be one trade union centre for two jurisdictions. Elsewhere the norm is two or even more in one country. The membership profile of the ICTU is unique, it is precious. The report sends a message to all the component parts of the trade union movement to get engaged, to get involved and to participate.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity. I bring best wishes from Philip Bowyer, we were a partnership in conduction this exercise. He is now enjoying retirement in Wales. I want to thank each of you and all of the unions that participated, to thank the Executive for giving me this privilege and opportunity. We realised that this was an exercise that had to take place across the generations. It is not the first time that this has happened. The concerns over fragmentation, of structure has been a common threat in previous reports. Now another opportunity presents itself. You are requested to pursue a path of change, to engage your members, your Executive, to consider a new way forward for the Irish Trade Union movement. I encourage you to take those next steps not just to contemplate

change but to be innovative in your approach and to see which connects you even more to a suffering Irish workforce. You do so from a position of strength. This really is a defining moment. I remain as excited at the prospect and potential as I was the day David Begg and Jack O'Connor approached me. This can be done, go for it, it really is in your hands. Make Future Positive work. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Well done Philip. I am very sorry to say John that you have to follow that. John Douglas is going to move Motion No. 9 on behalf of the Executive Council.

John Douglas, Vice President of Congress

Thank you delegates, I get all the easy gigs in this place! This short four lined motion is arguably the most important motion that has ever been before a trade union conference and certainly in the last 50 years it is the most important motion that you have to consider. The origins of the motion go back to 2009 BDC and the Trade Union Commission Report which was adopted in 2011 so it goes back to over four years maybe five years. And since then the world has changed, utterly changed. The economy has utterly changed. Financial capitalism has collapsed both domestically and internationally and it has been kept alive on a life support at a huge cost to workers, their families and the most vulnerable in society. There is no doubt in mind and in your mind as fellow trade unionists that previous generations of trade unionists at conferences like this also faced difficult economic decisions and also faced difficult economic times and events. And in doing so they made very brave and unselfish decisions and sacrifices in the interest of the movement and their class. Self-interest, egos, personal positions were set aside replaced with a vision for the future where cooperation replaced conflict, solidarity replaced isolation, where hope replaced despair. New leaders emerged then and brothers and sisters were fused into a movement. The time has now come again when ordinary men and women must stand up and be counted. It is our time in history. It is our time to do the right thing. We have inherited a proud trade union legacy and it is our duty to carry the trade union flame to the next generation. As we speak and ponder, capital is reorganising. Workers' rights and collective bargaining are under attack and trade union values are being undermined. Our enemies have a plan and that plan is to take us off the pitch as Philip has said so that they can create a new golden age of capitalism, a new golden age for themselves, a new golden age for a few at the expense of the many. And, be in no doubt, our movement is the only credible force that confronted them. Our movement is the largest civil society organisation on this island. We have a responsibility to shape our movement into the most effective force for real change – change which touches the lives of every working family in Ireland. Change not only gives hope and vision of a better society and fairer society but gives working families a means to achieve that change.

The Future Positive Report is the result of extensive consultations with unions and union activists for over four years as I said. It sets out options and lays out a road map for a journey for the trade union movement – and they are only options. The final path will be decided by you in the course of those discussions in the future. A journey to a new radical, a new powerful movement capable of delivering for our members, their families and the most vulnerable in society. It is proposing that the future firstly be built on utilising the potential power of local activists to the fullest extent not just in an industrialist context but in pursuit of social, economic and political objectives. The new movement will also focus on much more sharing and pooling of resources in a way which we have done with NERI so that we can make the type of impact we need to in Irish society.

One of the ideas is that we establish a Workers' College and we look at the ways we organise industrially so that we can use our strength to more effectively negotiate better pay, terms, and conditions of employment for our members. Of course such a process of change is

not going to happen overnight. We are looking at a five year process as David has said, beginning with the preparation and consideration and options for a new constitution for the movement. This process will involve the drafting of a new constitution which will then come before you at a Special Delegate Conference. So, be in no doubt it is an absolute requirement that we begin this journey of transformation, it is not an option. There will be those who will travel the road at different speeds. Some unions will chose to travel together while others will join the journey at a later stage when they are ready to do so, and I stress that when they are ready to do so. But, it is envisaged that the march of progress will mean that the whole trade union family will join us in due course. Comrades, we have a responsibility to those who went before us. We have but one chance. Failure is not an option. Our shared history demands that we succeed, succeed to build the fight back, succeed to rebuild the trade union movement and succeed to recapture the spirit of 1913. Delegates, I urge you to support the motion, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Anyone who is going to speak to this motion can they please come and occupy the front two rows here please so that we can get some indication of where we are.

Pamela Dooley, UNISON

President, delegates, Pamela Dooley, Executive Council seconding Motion 9. There is agreement across our movement that we need to revitalise and restructure ourselves to meet the enormous challenge facing working people. What the change should look like is still under discussion. Much of the preliminary engagement took place with the Trade Union Commission. Indeed, most recently the Northern Committee of Congress had a special meeting to consider what change might mean in more detail. One of the things we have recognised is that there is much good practice in our movement and there are models both north and south from which we could borrow to reorganise across the Congress. As John said, this is an enabling motion. It does not automatically change the Congress Constitution or impose any new structure. However, it does instruct the incoming Executive Council to move to the next phase which is to draft a new constitution for the discussion at a Special Delegate Conference. In the course of that drafting exercise, the Executive Council will look closely at the coordination between itself and the Northern Ireland Committee. It will look at the composition of the Executive Council. It will look at how we ensure that equality and human rights and our international perspective are all properly reflected. It will consider in detail the core functions of the Congress itself. It will consider how we can best collectively bargain and above all it will be designed to ensure that we become attractive to the unorganised worker. You can see from this that there is still much work to do. The purpose of this enabling motion is to secure the consent of affiliates now so that we can move ahead. The clear democratic commitment is that any new constitution will be considered in detail and voted on in detail at a Special Delegate Conference to be convened at a date agreed by the incoming Executive Council. Delegates, this is a chance for us to move forward and to demonstrate that Irish trade union movement, the most diverse and widespread organisation across this island, is a force for social change and one which Governments and employers alike must take seriously. I support.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Before we move on to speakers can I call Jack McGinley, Chair of Standing Orders please.

Jack McGinley, Chair of Standing Orders Committee

Colleagues, in view of the number of speakers presenting to speak on this subject, Standing Orders are of the view that we should continue this session till 5.30pm in order to expedite the business. I move.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Have we agreed? Agreed. Thank you Jack. Speakers.

Deirdre O'Connor from INTO

Deirdre O'Connor, INTO and Chair of the Congress Disability Committee. Colleagues, I was one of a group from the various equality related committees, North and South, who came together last July. Members of the Women's Committee, Disability Committee and the Strategic Implementation Committee on equality issues, and we made a submission to the Commission. In that submission we made the case for the continued and enhanced engagement on equality issues within the trade union movement. We proposed the adoption of a commitment to equality mainstreaming and enhanced ways of working to further the profile of equality work within the union movement, and we welcome the references contained in the document to equality, particularly to the fact that it is recognised that societies which value equality do better than others. However, I think that it is disappointing to see what level of our submission is reflected in the second part of the report of the Commission which is the piece on organising for challenging times. Because I think it is clear to everybody that key to successful organising and making the union movement relevant is to ensure that the voices of those who are unrepresented and those who continue to be disadvantaged in the workplace and in the trade union movement are reflected in our structures whether they are women who continue to have the gender pay gap, who continue to be the majority in precarious employment, and notwithstanding our numbers, who continue to be under-represented in both leadership roles in the workplace and in the trade union movement, whether they are people with disabilities who are twice as likely to be unemployed as those without disabilities, or whether they are people who are discriminated in the workplace on the basis of their race or their sexual orientation. Those voices need to be heard at the highest level in the trade union movement and we need to make sure that those people feel that they are included at grassroots level. So, in support of the motion I would call on the Executive Council in their work to reflect those things in relation to equality and have that effected in the work that comes out. Thank you colleagues.

Steve Fitzpatrick, CWU

Conference, colleagues, Steve Fitzpatrick, Communications Workers' Union of Ireland. Could I just say that when we discussed the Commission at Executive level and when we have discussed it previously, some people get kind of a glazed look and then they get a puzzled look because it is really akin to asking turkeys to vote for Christmas.

When I started off eight or nine years ago as a relatively young General Secretary, my ambition was to try and rebuild our own union which was pretty damaged at the time and I wanted it to be a modern, organising, campaigning union. I wanted it to play its part nationally and internationally. We built a new house, we are financially sound, we have an united body now. We have new structure, we have pensioners' organisations and we have recently passed motions to build unemployed members' branches. We now play a role at home and abroad, so you might be kind of inclined to ask yourself, and I know some of our own Executive asked when John presented this to the Executive, but why do we want to change when we are happy with what we have, and we are proud of what we got, and would we be better off anywhere else? And, of course, the reason we have to change is that it is not enough. All of those things we have done is just not enough because we can't change or win against the outside factors that are raised against us. We can't defeat the new weapons that our enemies deploy. Many, many moons ago we would have been worried about strike-breakers and the resources these people have. Now we have deregulation, liberalisation, privatisation, Troikas – all internationally driven – all of these things that my union can't fight on its own. And, things that no union in this building, no union in this Europe can fight on their own. None of us are capable of winning this battle on our own and the

reason that we have been involved in all these little battles whether it is in the private sector or the public sector is because we have been fighting those battles on our own. We saw the JLCs go down the swanny, and along with this went a lot of solidarity. When we had the demos where was all the union solidarity? When the REAs went, where were all the union members? When we had Haddington Road and Croke Park when they picked off the private sector, they did exactly what Philip said, they came after the public sector. We can't win these battles on our own and all these battles are part of a greater war.

I have to say that my time as General Secretary, that short term, I witnessed the death of JLCs and REAs, I witnessed the death of social partnership, I have witnessed the death of Croke Park and Haddington Road. It has all happened on our watch. If we had won all of those battles we would be up here clapping each other on the back. We have nearly lost all of those battles and it has happened in our watch. The truth of it is, is that we are losing this war and we now have an opportunity to do something that might help us win it and it won't be pleasant and it won't be easy and it will mean people giving up a little bit of what they hold dear. But other than that what we hold dear, I urge you not to just support this motion but to help us build it into something more. Thank you Conference.

Billy Lynn, NIPSA

President, as I look out at this conference, all I can see is the colour orange round the necks of delegates. So I don't know delegates whether it is brothers and sisters or just call them brethren or whether they are wearing orange because Armagh finally won a game this season! But I will call you comrades because I am a Socialist. My name is Billy Lynn from NIPSA.

There is no doubt this movement faces huge challenges and huge struggles in defending working people against capitalism. Let's call it what it is – a filthy neo-liberalism, it is capitalism we are struggling against and it is correct that we need to a revitalised and restructured trade union movement. And, implementing this motion we need ensure all unions feel comfortable with the process. We must have an inclusive process with no sector, no union, no union based in Northern Ireland or Southern Ireland, no family, all-Ireland, dominating the discussion or the situation. We need to feel part on the ground of any new structures, and in particular with proper consultation on drafting any new constitution. It must be done by consensus. As the President, Eugene McGlone said this morning, we give it a good test and not just accept it. However, Conference, and I don't intend to develop this, my union cannot accept much of the economic analysis contained in this document. We simply cannot do it. However, we do support the motion. NIPSA works closely with its sister unions, particularly PCS, where we share facilities. We also work closely with our sister union, UNISON and I believe that we have to work more closely with UNISON. In fact, I believe that UNISON and NIPSA should merge. I even have the name of the new merged union. The new merged union's name is going to be called NIPSA. Brothers and sisters, I urge unions to get involved and the reshaping and building our trade union structures in Ireland. It is this movement that defends our class, the working class, thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Billy, and the new merged union is going to be an association.

Shay Cody, IMPACT

President, Shay Cody, IMPACT. As David pointed out in his introductory remarks, in the recent public service negotiations on Haddington Road, there were nineteen Congress unions and eight additional non-Congress unions in negotiations. Imagine nineteen independent Republics affiliated to this Congress negotiating with one person and believing that we were autonomous in representing our members in the strongest manner. We were in the same

situation before in the mid-80s and while there has been some rationalisation of our structures since then, there hasn't been enough. We use the word rationalisation but actually what we must do has to be both rational and strategic. We organise workers in employments, in industries, in sectors and for professions in certain sectors and we need an organisational structure that allows us to effectively organise to negotiate a campaign and to exert influence over the next 100 years. We must recognise that some of our current organisational shape and structure is well over 100 years old. What we require are fewer unions. We require suitable and acceptable internal structure to allow for cohesion and when necessary, as much autonomy as possible. I believe there must be and will be a willingness in our various sectors to learn from recent events and develop a bargaining approach that maximises the influence and strength of our membership. We need to organise in sectors that will make sense for the coming decades and generations. It requires that responsibility is given to one entity to organise the unorganised in its sector or service. We need one entity to be responsible for all manufacturing, for all commercial services, for all retail and distribution, for all community and for all infrastructure and for all public and social services. These categories are not set in stone but on the face of it they make sense and we should stick with them unless and until some better proposals emerge. In the absence of this level of cohesion and rationalisation we will continue to be reluctant to invest time, energy and funds into the hard graft of organising within our relevant sectors. It is easy for us to bemoan falling density and sit back and see the solution as somebody else's responsibility. We have already seen now coming together and pooling resources can work. Some of us, many of us, have helped create the Nevin Institute which has achieved for the trade union movement an outcome that we could not conceivably achieve by working alone in silos. We should now move on the logical consequence and mainstream it into the core of Congress activities. Why can't we do the same for training & education facilities, property, legal services, other common services?

Colleagues, you will all be aware that public service unions and workers have gone through a most difficult recent experience but we recognise others have gone through worse. Those who have lost JLC protections and REAs are facing catastrophic losses and the very existence of trade union organisation is in question in some of those areas. It must encourage us to embrace the logical of the Commission recommendations. IMPACT will be a willing supporter of the strategy even though it will force us to face significant organisational changes. David has taken to quoting the great Italian Antonio Gramsci recently, I would like to quote another Primo Livi, "if not now when?". Thank you.

Jimmy Kelly, UNITE

I tried my best to time that to be after Jack but he got in there. Conference, I want to express concerns on behalf of UNITE and suspicions and genuinely held suspicions on behalf of UNITE. And, the language, 'go with the flow, don't lose any sleep over this, we need to change, the train is leaving the station', doesn't give comfort or assurance to unite and we are asking serious and genuine questions about what direction we are going in. We absolutely understand the need for change. Bosses and Government won't leave us stand still, won't leave us just holding the members that we have. We are going to lose membership unless we are organising, unless we are building where we already have recognition. UNITE is putting its money where its mouth is in terms of the Nevin Economic Research Institute - €50,000 a year – and absolutely money well spent and a fantastic job being done by the Institute. We are prepared and have worked jointly with other unions on organising. We have done joint organising with SIPTU, we are up for the joint organising that John Douglas is developing later in the year, bringing all unions together to see how we can work better together on the organising. We don't need to be convinced of the need to change. But we are not convinced that change by the structures that have been outlined on the presentation is absolutely going to change anything. Workplace organisation is absolutely the foundation for this movement. Shop Stewards stepping forward every day prepared to represent people in hospitals, in

factories, in offices and wherever our members work, they are absolutely the bedrock and the foundation. I don't know what this new structure does for people at that level. I don't buy for one minute that the problem with Haddington Road was the number of unions that were on the other side of the table with the employer and I am not going to go on talking about it. I am not going to go on talking about Haddington Road one way or the other but that wasn't the problem with what happened to Croke Park 2 and Haddington Road. Organising has to be at the very foundation of the movement. I don't believe structures are going to change what was outlined by those speakers in terms of the attack on the movement. What is happening in regard to collective bargaining, what is not happening in relation to collective bargaining, the Supreme Court ruling on Registered Employment Agreements, what's happening on pension protection funds. Still a Government not prepared to do the decent thing even though workers won in the European Court of Justice. Government is still not prepared to do what needs to be done. I don't believe structures are going to move that Government in the direction that we need to move in. The question will always come back to how are we going to mobilise? How are we going to mobilise the fight for what we want and I don't believe structures are the answer to those problems. UNITE is saying clearly we are prepared to support the motion to examine more widely what is being outlined by the Executive motion, examine those widely but don't impose anything on any union that's not comfortable with every step along the way and the consensus that's needed along the way. And, my union along with lots of other unions won't be accepting anything being imposed that comes out of this process, thank you.

Liam Gallagher, UNITE

Brethren, Conference, delegates, Liam Gallagher, UNITE and like Jimmy I do have concerns about this motion. Philip made a wonderful presentation convincing us all of the need for the organisation to change, restructure, the building of a union that is fit for purpose to meet the challenges that we all face and are going to face. No one could argue against that. The difficulty is, and I mean I see the difficulty and recognise that union density is where it is for a combination of reasons, but it seems to me that the best way of increasing union density is not the structure but a structure that has teeth, not a toothless tiger. Haddington Road was to all intents and purposes forced upon workers and the workers that held out and tried to fight and tried to resist unfortunately had to comply. We were faced, colleagues, with a situation where legislation which had never been introduced since the 40's, since the emergency, is now on the statute books. That is a solitary warning for every trade union and it seems to me that the best way of growing our membership is to get teeth. I think that Congress should have done something and should seriously do something about that legislation.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU

President, delegates, Jack O'Connor, SIPTU. Delegates, we all know here in this hall that we are living in an extraordinary period, a period of history that will determine the ship shape of the future probably for the remainder of this century at least. Indeed, the last time the economic system was here, the last time humanity was here was in the 1930s and we all know the way that worked out. The future will not be the same as the past. We are in a moment of transition in the history of humanity. And what will decide whether that future is more brutal, or more benign will be the strength and the quality of the strength of the trade union movement and the wider labour movement internationally and we have to do our duty here in this movement, in this small island as part of that process. And judging by the experience to date, and you said it yourself President in your speech this morning, judging by the experience to date we have failed. I have to say that I was stirred myself by Mick O'Reilly's very fine speech this morning reminding us all of our responsibility to encourage people to go out and engage in battle on behalf of our class and against the enemy. Yes, I believe we must do that. I agree with Mick O'Reilly in that regard and there would be people here who might doubt that. I agree with Mick that we have to lead our people out into battle but we have to go beyond that. We have to equip them with a chance of actually winning that battle. It is

not enough just to lead them out to be slaughtered and in that regard that means arming them and building a capacity to fight. It means building the Nevin Institute to its full potential to challenge the hegemony of the other side in the battle for the ideas that will envisage the future. It means creating the Workers' College between us all to build a cadre of people to challenge the given interpretation of the world which is actually the other side's interpretation of it. And it means creating a communications capacity to compete with their propaganda, with the way they manage and condition society day by day, and most of all it means creating a capacity to coordinate collective bargaining and organising sector across the economy. There is a lot of theorising over the last number of years about whether or not young people are joining unions and why they are not joining unions and all sorts of ideas about us not speaking their language and not using the social media right and all the other stuff. I believe delegates that we are ignoring the elephant in the room in that regard. The reason why young people are not joining unions is because they don't believe that we have the capacity to equip them to win the battles they have to fight. That's why and our task, delegates, is to address that challenge. And, delegates, I will finish now President, delegates there has been a good deal of talk about the success of the Nevin Institute thus far. I remind you of this – we are 40 per cent of the way to creating the budget of a €1m euro that that Institute needs to make a fight of it and it has taken us four years to get to 40 per cent of €1m in a movement that raises more than €100,000,000 in membership subscriptions every year. I have no doubt delegates that at that pace that if we had 1,000 years we would undoubtedly save the world but unfortunately we don't. And, delegates, I will finish on this, delegates the elegance of this concept is this – that we can move together at different paces. That unions that are concerned about the implications for their organisational integrity can participate fully and help us build the new movement that will ensure that working people on this island have a say in the architecture of the future and that it is not exclusively designed by those who represent the interests of the other side whose sole preoccupation is the accumulation of profit to the exclusion of every social and human consideration. We talk a lot about solidarity, delegates, this is about doing it. Thanks President.

John MacGabhann, TUI

I hoped I would get up while the applause was still ringing, at least I can take heart from it and I offered my place to Eoin Ronayne but he wouldn't take it!

John MacGabhann, Teachers Union of Ireland. I suppose what I want to start by saying is that one of the very valuable products of today's deliberations so far has been precisely that maybe for a lot of us, not for the first time necessarily, but for the first time for some time we have been invited to lift our snout out of our own individual troughs and look to see what's happening around us not just domestically but in the world generally. And it is not pretty and it is organised and it is relentless and it does have a capacity that could serve very easily to frighten. Without being picky I think I can say that the analysis set up by the General Secretary of the global situation of the situation, they didn't differ much in terms of the forces that are there, that we acknowledge that, that we see that acknowledging it and seeing it requires us also to do what it is necessary structurally to do in order to best meet the challenge, to understand the nature and scale of the challenge in the first place. So, we will find fault with nobody for suggesting new structures. We may find fault with some of the structures. We reserve the right, and I think Jack O'Connor was very generous in affirming the right of any union that has misgivings to express those misgivings, to bring those misgivings in terms of ideas to whatever consultative process ensues. And, in the TUI we do have misgivings. I believe for some time past there has been what certainly the Public Services Committee has referred to as the 'TUI problem'. Now it sounds like a social disease and maybe it is, but it is a disease that is not based on fear. It is a disease that is not based on apprehension about the motives of others. It is a fear that is based on a concern that we would somehow not be as well able as currently we are to represent the members who choose freely to pay a

subscription to our union year by year. That is not it either. I want to make clear simply a public service union leading a gilded existence wishing to stay apart from the problems that afflict others in the hope that they won't afflict them, because assuredly what afflicts the private sector will come in time to afflict the public sector. But one of the things that this document lacks in our view, one of the things the proposal lacks – maybe inevitably in this case – is an understanding of the need for emotional structures. There has been no discussion here of the views of our members. The actual people who pay the subs and we are concerned that in the TUI our members are afraid of a type of homogenisation of problems to a homogenisation internationally of assault. We have things that are specific to us. We have things that uniquely affect us and the structures here don't seem at first glance necessarily to allow for the nuancing that would be required. We do not want structures that simply assume that you can in some bland formulation describe problems and then limit what the trade union movement does simply to addressing those problems. So, we make no apologies on behalf of our members for saying that there are things particular to us which even within the context of developing significant relationships within the Teachers Union structure. We have made progress but we want to make that progress assuredly, we want to make that progress with confidence and we do not want to be rushed into structures that do not recognise sufficiently the emotional environment – I wish I had a better term, it's the best I can do at the moment – so whatever is done please let us proceed with due caution, without haste – I am probably the lone voice on this side of the argument, President, please proceed with extreme caution. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

There are six speakers indicating they want to speak on this, no seven, look given the time I am closing it at seven so after Liam that's the end of it, we have to finish by 5.30pm.

Eoin Ronayne, CPSU

Eoin Ronayne, Civil Public Services Union, I won't be too long. Our union has supported the various calls over the years for a move in this direction. Essentially we face a major challenge in two areas and I disagree a little with John about the notion that there isn't fear. There is a suspicion amongst us all about what this will do to our own structures and the way we represent our members and that suspicion is stopping many of us move that extra mile that this motion envisages we have to do. There is also the self-interest of the structures we have created over the years and that has served our members well, and they are ensconced in each union and they have to be tackled and dealt with. And in our own organisation in the public service, we have had experience in a structure that has worked for years which has gone wrong. The traditional method of negotiating through the Public Services Committee didn't work for some of us in Lansdowne House. It led to a second set of negotiations which in honesty didn't work for us either so there is a reality, if only in the public service unions, that we have to deal with. And it has left us with a piece of legislation which not only does damage to public service unions, the FEMPI legislation, it also potentially damages private sector unions because if I was IBEC I would like a bit of that action too please and I am sure we don't want that. Steve Fitz summed it up correctly, on our watch things have gone disastrously wrong and this is an opportunity to begin to face the elephants in the room and to move it on. We will back it. Shared services have worked exceedingly well, we have all mentioned it here today in relation to NERI, we have options to do this in the whole area of legal support as has been mentioned by Shay. But, we have got to be cautious and I respect what Jimmy is saying, we have to move this at a pace that people understand that this is about making us stronger, better. If it is only about structures it will not deliver. The strength on the ground within the membership to do what we have been talking about all day which is wrestling back control from the capitalist class which is getting rid of what is making things so bad for workers today. I ask you to support this motion but in particular embrace it and bring the members with us – that is the challenge – bringing it beyond this room to the people on the

ground who can actually make this happen and getting them to buy in but we must do it at a pace at which they can cope with. I ask you to support the motion.

Brendan Broderick, ASTI

Mr President, delegates, Brendan Broderick, ASTI. I am here as a delegate, I am not a trade union leader and Bill Clinton once said that politics is a combination of rhetoric and reality. And I have been sitting up there in the gallery and I had no intention of coming down here but I have been listening to the rhetoric all morning and it has been quite impressive. But, what has it got to do with reality? There has been a lot said about solidarity this morning. Every major speaker spoke about solidarity but let's cut to the chase, and I am glad that this is a private session because I wouldn't say this in public. The Haddington Road Agreement is not only a humiliation but it was a public humiliation for the trade union movement. And the results of that are only coming home to roost. When I was sitting up there I had this text from my wife who happens to be a nurse. She said I want to talk to you about the 39 hour week, they want us to do extra work on the wards to replace agency nurses. I am meeting my direct nursing boss tomorrow but there was a general meeting today and this is the deal. I can apply to stay at 37.5 hours and take a pay cut, I don't know what to do as I couldn't go back to the wards. Now, I won't go through the history of why she got off the wards but she hasn't worked on a ward for ten years. I got another text from a person who works in the Department of Agriculture, nothing to do with my union, she discovered that she is going to have to work 2.5 extra hours a week and she didn't realise this when she voted because it was recommended by her union to vote in favour of the agreement. But what is puzzling people out there, ordinary members, is that when ICTU put out a report, when they put out some really good reports, they are always against austerity and yet when individual unions go into negotiate, they negotiate a deal that is pro-austerity and then they recommend it to their members. And the ordinary members are left scratching their heads because they are saying these people are talking out of both sides of their mouth. Now, make up your mind, are we for austerity or are we against it and the rhetoric is not good enough we need some action as well.

There is another concern our members have and that is that the few unions that are still outside of Haddington Road, if they do reject the deal are they going to be punished for it because the suspicion is out there, despite the rhetoric about solidarity, that they will be punished and they have to be seen to be punished because how will the unions who voted for Haddington Road explain to their members, oh these guys have a pay cut imposed them but they are able to resist the changes. So, as a trade union we have got a big job to do. This motion is talking about revitalising and restructuring our unions but before we do that I think we have to get the message, we have a lot of work to do with our members in order that the credibility of the trade union movement there – the integrity of the trade union movement there – which let's face it is being called into question by our members.

Finally, I want to say we had a very good speech from our President this morning and there is another concern that there are certain trade union leaders, and again I wouldn't say this in public, but they seem to be putting the interests of a political party ahead of their own members. In this situation again our members need to know that if we are going forward that these things need to be clarified, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Brendan.

Miriam Duggan, ASTI

Miriam Duggan, ASTI delegate. President, I don't like to have to follow that speech by Brendan but I just have a question and it is this. The motion speaks about revitalising the structure of the trade union and the trade union movement, my question is this. I am quite

convinced by speakers today about how important it is for the trade union movement to position itself globally against all the threats and I hear all of that but I am left with the question that I pay my membership to my trade union and I want my voice to be heard, so I would like to hear an awful more about members' voices and I would like to be very, very sure that any moves that are made do not include democratic deficit because that would be my fear as a member, thank you.

Seamus Dooley, NUJ

Seamus Dooley, National Union of Journalists. Jimmy Kelly is absolutely right and I don't always say that. There can be no imposition of structures and there will be no imposition of structures. That is not the proposition before you, that there is absolutely no concern and no one on either side of this argument or the Haddington Road Agreement has some sort of moral monopoly on virtue. What this is about is facing far greater challenges than any individual moment in the history of this movement. It is facing a global challenge which was been well and truly delineated by Philip today. And, I speak as an endangered species and it is the second time I have had to do that because the rule change in relation to reserved seats for women left me at the bottom of the pile, I am not canvassing, but I was one of two people who could very well find myself endangered but that is the price for change and in the same way I don't know if we have a future. I know we couldn't afford as a union because of our restructuring to make even a miserly contribution to the Nevin Institute. Our union is banjaxed, I would have used a more impolite term if there weren't ladies present. Our union is like many other unions – we are struggling to survive but our individual struggles are less important than the struggles of the wider trade union movement and we have to get real here. What we are being asked to do is to face up to a challenge and to do that in a structured way that is all that this motion asks of us to do. But we are doing that in a context. We are doing that in a context where some of our members and some of our so called leaders beat 50 shades of shit out of each other on radio and television in the last 12 months and then when they saw they when they repelled the bruises said, it is all the fault of the NUJ members who are covering this and implying that somehow there is a division among our ranks. We need to move forward, we need to move forward together, we need to recognise that all of us have difference. No one has a monopoly on this one – let's move together in a spirit of solidarity, let's even move together in a spirit of unite!

Noel Ward, INTO

There are things I could say about the Haddington Road Agreement but this is really not a debate about the agreement. It is, as Seamus Dooley has said, about a much wider question about how we manage our affairs and handle our affairs for quite a long time ahead. And, the experience of the teacher unions and I think it is the joint experience of the teacher unions, that we are better united when we can be united. We had an example of an organisation called 'Teachers United' in the 1980s, we came together in recent years to develop policy on public service pensions to the Trident Report, North and South teacher unions cooperate regarding teacher benefits and following motions at all the conferences of the teacher unions, we devised a document a couple of years ago, last year, on teacher union cooperation to try to map a way forward because I think the joint experience is that we are better when we are together and we can do things in a collaborative way. And in that regard, I think one of the points that should be made in terms of our members is that our members are ahead of us in a lot of this. They know that it doesn't make sense to make a whole lot of cellular silo unions all talking about the same thing but with different personalities and different committees and different structures. I think they know that and in a sense it is those of us in senior positions in trade unions who might turn out to be the greater block to progress because this report told us something that something that we didn't need a report to tell us but that we are better in terms of political lobbying, in terms of media work, in terms of research and policy when we come together and pool our resources. And, just finally, the General Secretary spoke about the

fundamental battle being one of ideas, and it is a battle about ideas, but we must ask ourselves why are our ideas not winning and not winning out. And, if our structures are getting in the way of that, then we should be pretty quick to cast aside those structures and build from the ground up in a manner that will allow our ideas to come to the fore and to win, thanks.

Eamon Devoy, TEEU

Good evening, Eamon Devoy, Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union. The TEEU has for the last few years worked with the Commission and looked at the Commission's work with some degree of trepidation because we are union that is spread right across the spectrum of society. Shay Cody listed out a number of sectors – the TEEU would cross all of those sectors – we don't have a sector all to ourselves and so on. We looked at the document before this conference, we have some concerns about the political lead in to in with some of the analysis, some of the language used but look, that is neither here nor there, the second part of the document is the important thing – how do we move forward? We take the view that we can't wait around. I think that if some of the things that were said already at this rostrum this afternoon are to be listened to, I think we will all be here in the 1,000 years that Jack O'Connor spoke about.

There are three things I would say and it is this. Already as a result of the work of the Commission, a number of unions are working closer together. TEEU is working closely with the construction unions in the energy sector and I have to say that things that are going to make sense in the future, common sense, so the relationship between those unions is building so natural cooperation can be extended and cohesion can come about as a result of that.

The second thing I am going to say is Jack O'Connor mentioned about the Workers' College both North and South and I have to say, we have to get it in to our members' minds, in to our Shop Stewards' minds that there is a political dimension to what we are about. Just talking about disciplinary matters and so on in the workplace has nothing to do with the core issue that confront the trade union movement. I am not going to rehearse all the things about the Troika and all the things that have been said, and the loss of the REAs, but every hand's turn we are on the losing path because they know they can pick us off. We need to be united.

The third thing I am going to say is – I said this at every meeting I have gone to about the Commission – I said it in Clane and I will say it again, we can't wait around. There are lots of synergies we can do. There is a great initiative, for example, brought about by the CWU in relation to e-mobile, Congress has taken up that opportunity, TEEU has taken up that opportunity, other unions will take up that opportunity where we can build a good relationship across the whole trade union movement with a good company that employs trade union labour and help to sustain and improve hopefully the terms and conditions of employment for those workers. So, my clear message is – let's not work around, let's move it every step we can forward on this progress on the Commission and I propose the motion to Conference, thanks.

Liam Doran, INMO

President, delegates, Liam Doran from the Irish Nurses & Midwives Organisation. First of all, can I complement the presentation earlier on. It was uplifting in so many ways because we do have to believe when we come together that we have a future because the last couple of years have been extremely difficult for all of us who believe in the rights of workers to have a voice in the workplace. To get a sense that someone has a belief for a new beginning is of itself uplifting. But, I think I also come from an organisation that is quite a late arrival at Congress – 24 years ago we came to Congress – and that was with its troubles at the time with various spheres of influence and so on. And since then, there would always have been a view that in some segments of my organisation, that Congress had tremendous benefits, an ability to speak about the collective but it also had its minuses that you couldn't articulate, you

couldn't seek innovation and change and enhancements for members within one sector that differed from the wider sector. You had social partnership agreements that my union sought to have different ways and there was an impression in my union at times that, you know, didn't go down well with the family and that you were put down and arrangements and understandings were arrived at with the other side of the table and we have always had to deal with that. But, I think it came to the fore, and I am not going to speak about the Haddington Road Agreement either, and my colleague from the ASTI who has a concerned other half, I have 41,000 concerned other halves at the moment so I share your pain! But, the truth is that if we don't learn that what happened over the last number of weeks and months and let me say quite clearly, I don't have a magic wand but the reality is, and I say this as friends because Congress will only survive as a collective when it looks best after those who are weakest amongst its family, not looking after the strong. But the problem that we are struggling with in the Public Services Committee at the moment, and in fairness we have committed ourselves to have this, and I think it is a microcosm of what we are trying to do about the sectoral dimension is, we had as David said, 19 unions debating but the reality of it is and we have to have this conversation not necessarily in public, is that if 4 certain unions had voted yes for the first Croke Park Agreement, then 15 other unions' opinions would not have mattered. Now, I don't have a magic wand to solve that but all I am saying is that that would have stored up a great deal of trouble for this family. And it was avoided and we went in to other talks and there is an outcome now and so on but we have got to learn from that experience. We have got to have a debate with ourselves. So, what I am saying to this Congress is that I hope that when, because it is quite obvious that this report is going to be adopted, but in moving forward we have got to learn and we have got to take on board the harsh realities of that because that is not the democracy that will keep our members here. The 15 unions that might have had a yes vote by 4 and a no vote by 15, how do you think that they would have struggled to keep their members in common cause with Congress? So it is a huge challenge. We have got to answer it. We have got to answer it with coming out of this stronger. We have got to answer it by being able to rebut those who would take us off our knees and not even kick on the way past because they don't think we are worth it. But we are worth it but we are only worth it at our best when when we speak as one, we look after the weakest, the leanest and the skinniest and make them strong and that is what the objective of this project has got to be. If it succeeds in doing that, it is the best day's work. If it leaves anyone behind and professional unions can be left behind, then we will weaken what is potentially a strong union movement not strengthen it. So that is how we will be monitoring this progress. Do we look after everybody, do we look after the weakest, do we look after those with particular niche requirements? If we do that we will succeed but to do that we have got to answer honestly the dilemmas and the structural shortcoming that were there and exposed in the last number of weeks, thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Conference, I think my ambition this morning was that we would give this a good test, we have given a fair outing on it and I think the quality of the debate has been very, very informative and it has been a debate taken in the proper spirit. John, do you want to make a response? Thank you.

John Douglas, Vice President of Congress

Just a very brief response, a half a minute. There were 17 speakers and all the speakers were excellent and made excellent points which will have to be taken on board. There will be full consultation, no one will be forced, we will journey together, no one will be left behind. Structures in themselves are not going to solve our problems. Structures themselves are the bones of the skeleton. The muscle on those bones are the union activists, the members, the Shop Stewards that we have and they are the people we have to put in place and they are the people that are going to be number one in any debate, in any reconstitution of this movement.

And we have to take on board, there is no doubt about it we have to take on board the emotional environment that has evolved over the last three or four years and there are scars. And, we need to let those scars heal but the only way we can heal them is together and together, united, looking after the most vulnerable in our society. I come from a union which organises workers in the retail sector. There were 50 of us outside Dáil Éireann when they struck down the minimum wage, 50 of us. There weren't too many professionals, there weren't too many public sector workers there. Now unless we get our act together, unless we fight and get out of the silos that we are in and stop slagging each other at every hand's turn, unless we build a movement, an individual or a nurse is as important to a retail worker. An individual to a doctor is as important to a teacher so we need to start uniting and fighting together over a common cause and a common agenda. We will put this movement together and it will be strong, it will be fitter, it will fight back and we will lead the fight back for our class. I urge you to support the motion, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks John.

Conference, I call on a vote on Motion No. 9. Those in favour please show, is there any one against? Almost unanimous.

I call on a vote of the adoption of the report on the Commission on Trade Unions – those in favour, against, adopted.

Can I call on John MacGabhann, General Secretary of the TUI.

John MacGabhann, TUI

President, this is referred to in Standing Orders Report No. 2 and the Chair of Standing Orders made mention of it this morning. I will not go into any detail on this. The TUI has appealed a recommendation in respect of a complaint that was made against the service provided by the union by three members. The three members concerned, we understand, have been informed of the availability to them of an appeal. They also want a review of the recommendation and they have available to them the Ombudsman, the ICTU Ombudsman structure. They haven't yet utilised that to my understanding, therefore, any appeal today to be heard by this conference would be premature given that the internal available structures have not yet been exhausted and on that basis we are perfectly happy to accept the recommendation of the Standing Orders Committee.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks very much John.

Ok, the only thing that remains for me to remind you is that for those of you who are attending the civic reception in the City Hall this evening, there is a free guided tour of the City Hall commencing at 6pm, so you need to get a move on. Thanks very much for your tolerance Conference. Will everyone please be in the room at 9.30 in the morning sharp, thank you.

Wednesday 3rd July, 2013

Morning Session

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Conference, can I call to order please. Can I call on the Chair of Standing Orders, Jack McGinley please.

Jack McGinley, Chair of Standing Orders Committee

Delegates, the arrangements for the exchange of credential stubs and the issuing of voting cards and ballot papers will be as follows: as was said yesterday, it started at 2.30pm yesterday afternoon and will conclude at 11am this morning. Each delegate must personally exchange his/her credential stub for a voting card. Ballot papers for the election of the Congress Executive will be issued from 11 until close to 3pm in Meeting Room No. 1. Each union will be asked to nominate a principle delegate who in exchange for the voting cards will collect the ballot papers from a polling station situated away from the main Conference Hall. On completion, ballot papers should be returned to the sealed ballot boxes in the polling station by the individual delegates or by the principle delegate in accordance with union practice before 15.00hrs this afternoon. Thank you delegates.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you, is that agreed? Agreed.

Can I call upon the General Secretary, David Begg please.

David Begg, General Secretary

Good morning colleagues. I'll just remark that we have just been joined by the General Secretary of the ETUC, Bernadette Ségol, our good comrade here in the front and I want to say to her how very welcome she is and she will be addressing conference later on this morning.

A bit less welcome news I think is that you will see from the agenda that as we are due to go into the International Session, we were due to be joined this morning by An Tánaiste, Eamon Gilmore. His advisors phoned me on Monday evening to say that it was possible that he would be tied up on European Parliament business in Strasbourg on the issue of the budget and in fact he rang me yesterday evening to say that that was indeed the case and that he was very sorry that he wouldn't be able to attend. He had to be present in the Parliament to get the vote through on the European budget which, as you know, he negotiated. I took the opportunity during the conversation to talk to him a little bit about the collective bargaining issue which I will refer to when we get to that section on the agenda later in the afternoon. And, I just also want to say to the Northern Ireland colleagues and Patricia McKeown in particular that he has agreed to meet us in relation to the Good Friday Agreement on the 9th July, so we will follow up on that. But, I have no doubt that it is somewhat unwelcome news for conference, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you David.

Conference, we are going to deal with Section 6, International in the Report and Motion 10. I call upon the mover of Motion 10, Global Solidarity.

John Clinton, POA

Morning colleagues. Delegates, it is a pleasure to address you this morning during this important session on international issues. The fact that we have such a session and we are due to hear from ETUC General Secretary Bernadette Ségol, is testament to a movement that despite the many challenges facing us on this island understands that as a small isolated island on the North Western Seaboard of Europe, it is imperative to retain an international focus as an integral part of our work. This is clearly the right thing to do because we know only too well that there are worker struggles going on right around the globe and demand our very practical solidarity. Many of these are highlighted in Section 6 of the report, but it is also the smart thing to do, for surely in the globalised economy where capital flows so fluidly it is not in any of our interest to have large sways of the planet where workers' rights are even less respected than they are in this part of the world. I know that you all agree that putting a stop to the race to the bottom clearly does not end at our coastline. And that if it does, it is definitely doomed to failure. We can be proud of the work Congress and affiliated trade unions, who clearly get this message and express it in very practical terms, through their work including Congress is successfully bid to Irish Aid who granted €40,000 for a project coordinated by the ITUC to strengthen the trade union movement in Burma Miramar. The PSEU has also contributed towards the trade union legal network in Burma. Congress also wrote to the Tánaiste, Eamon Gilmore, TD, pointing out that Burma is only at the beginning of a long path towards the establishment of democracy and human rights and making the point that the EU must use its leverage to encourage the additional steps identified including the unconditional release of remaining political prisoners and the end of armed conflict with ethnic groups and elimination of forced labour in the coming years. Congress cooperated with the TUC and the Fiji Council of Trade Unions on the development of a Fiji Rugby campaign upon the visit of the Fiji Rugby team to these islands, including Thomond Park in Limerick in November, 2012. The campaign sought to raise awareness about the gross violations of human and trade union rights in that country and attracted much attention on social media and local press and radio. We participated in the public consultation phase for Ireland's new policy on development and made a strong case for decent work to be an integral part of development cooperation work.

We continue to work in solidarity with the people in Palestine, the Justice for Columbia in supporting trade unions there who face daily threats to their lives simply because they exercise their human rights to represent the interest of workers there. Affiliates' continue to support the work of Disability Aid Abroad on an international employment support program for workers with disabilities in Uganda and Tanzania. Our active involvement in the Clean Clothes Campaign, CCC, a global coalition of NGOs and trade unions that work together to push for better working conditions in the garment industry, for the empowerment of garment workers. Much of this work is coordinated by the work of the Global Solidarity Committee and it is imperative that affiliates continue their strong engagement in that forum so as to ensure we continue this important work in as an effective a manner and that the committee gets the recognition it deserves. Delegates, perhaps the most serious violation of trade union rights over the period we are discussing was the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh which resulted in the deaths of 1,129 people who worked in that garment factory there. That is more than twice the number of delegates at this conference here this morning. I will not dwell on this terrible tragedy now as we have a fringe event at lunchtime which will go into these events and trade union responses to it and I hope that will be well supported. Suffice it to say that we have played an active role in calling for the Bangladeshi Government to bring its labour laws into line with ILO standards to allow workers organise into unions to bargain collectively for decent wages and protect themselves from dangerous workplaces. We also played an active role in persuading retailers such as Pennys to sign up to the Accord on fire and building safety standards in Bangladesh, initiated by the IndustriALL and UNIGlobal Unions. Incoming Congress President, John Douglas, will lead a Congress

delegation who will meet with Pennys next week to discuss their response to the tragedy. With the permission of the President, I would suggest that we all stand for a minute's silence in memory of those lost workers who lost their lives in tragedy and for Irish workers who lost their lives here at home.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Permission granted, let's go.

John Clinton, POA

President, it is important that we also acknowledge the work of our Irish Aid supported development education programme which enables Congress to continue to run educational events, conferences and seminars to continue to engage Irish trade unions in supporting this work. I call on all affiliated trade unions to deepen their engagement with this vital work.

Finally, President, it is also worth pointing out that solidarity is a two way street. We embarked on our own struggle to achieve vindication of our human rights and collective bargaining in the Republic of Ireland. The Executive Council has been considering every possible avenue to pursue this objective including the International Labour Organisation and the European Court of Human Rights. We will need the support and solidarity of the international trade union movement and such international for a which I know will be forthcoming. Colleagues, international solidarity within the trade union movement has never been needed more. I commend the motion to conference and urge all of you to ensure that not only you support it today but ensure that your trade union continues to do so in practical ways in the years ahead, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks John, is there a seconder? Are you seconding it Michael? Ok.

Mick Dowling, Kildare CTU

Chairman, I am moving the resolution on behalf of Kildare Trades Council.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Are you seconding the motion?

Mick Dowling, Kildare CTU

Well, it is a similar motion, there are three sponsoring the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Well, you are seconding it so you are not getting five minutes.

Mick Dowling, Kildare CTU

I am with Kildare Council of Trade Unions and I am also the Vice Chair of Global Solidarity in Ireland. Just a bit of history on Global Solidarity – Global Solidarity is an Irish Congress of Trade Unions development education project. While Global Solidarity has been part of the trade union movement since the late 1970s, the current Global Solidarity as now constituted has gone through a number of phases. In 1980, ICTU created a 3rd World Committee as Advisory Committee to the Executive of Congress. I think this was run by a lady by the name of Joan O'Connell. Members in turn were nominated by unions and the committee went on to organise seminars, publish a newsletter and operate a 3rd World Fund, in addition to campaigning on labour and solidarity issues. The Northern Ireland Committee of Congress set up a 3rd World Committee in 1983. That is just to give you a slight history of this. There was a paper drawn up by Tim Hastings for the CWU which makes very good reading and I would suggest that you could get a copy of it. I would just like to say there are four established

committees of the ICTU – the Women’s Committee, the Disability Committee, the Youth Committee and the Retired Members Committee, we want Global Solidarity to join that group and be an established committee of Congress. When this resolution is passed, we need more Trades Councils to nominate delegates to the GSC. We need all unions and Trades Councils to nominate members to attend the Global Solidarity Summer School which is being held this year in the CWU HQ in Dublin on 23rd and 24th August. It was very successful last year thanks to the very good work done by Fiona Dunne. We need unions to set up Global Solidarity Committees in their organisations if none already exist, to promote awareness as these issues affect all of our livelihoods. Without international solidarity in 1913, where would we be now? We are as we pointed out already receiving financial aid from Irish Aid. This has decreased each year since the present crisis began. We cannot use any of these funds for campaigning on issues like Columbia, Palestine or Bahrain or any other new crisis that might arrive. The British TUC subsidised Justice for Columbia UK which employs three people full time. I think that the Irish trade unions would want to take some note of this. After this Conference I hope all delegates will have a better understanding of our role. We need further support for the interest and involvement of workers worldwide, unity is strength comrades, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Michael, speakers?

John O’Brien, INTO

Good morning, John O’Brien, INTO and Chair of the Global Solidarity Committee. Chair and delegates, I am delighted this motion has come before BDC and as Chair of the Committee I am very happy to support the proposal. You have heard the well-articulated reasons for the establishment of the committee as a full constituted committee of ICTU but just to give you a little bit of background of what it is about. As we all know Global Solidarity is not a new concept within the trade union movement, it has been with us for generations. But the need to up our game in relation to solidarity has reached a new urgency. The scale and acceleration of the globalisation of politics, economics and business has been staggering and while the international trade union movement has certainly kept abreast of events, it is probably fair to say that we have not been ahead of the curve. Solidarity work clearly has its roots in solidarity issues, encompassing trade union human rights, gender equality, equality for those with disabilities, the right to decent work and education for all. And, while it might not be entirely correct to draw the analogy of the start of the great gender equality struggle of the 70s, times were different and the struggle came from a different imperative and certainly isn’t over, but for the current world policy it is essential that the global trade union is strong, active, and cohesive. I believe Ireland needs to be involved fully in this process and where necessary be prepared to take a leading role. I am of the view that the ICTU Global Solidarity Committee can act as a conduit for a greater awareness within ICTU itself and perhaps more importantly within the affiliated unions in the ongoing campaigns, development education work and the potential for union to union action and thereby create a greater understanding of the real issues that can be tackled. Resources of course are always the key to this endeavour. However, whether it be at ICTU Executive level or within the Executive Committee and affiliated unions, it is not just financial resources I am talking about but time – time and access to union publications, websites, delegates for development education programmes and global solidarity committees or networks within the affiliates to carry the message to members, bread and butter stuff really. To move the global solidarity work from the periphery to the heart of what we do and to create a truly peaceful world without poverty may not really be within our gift alone. The trade union movement might not be able to stop wars or famine but we can campaign to defend fellow trade unionists when in trouble when standing up for their rights like in Columbia or oppressed for protesting against tyranny as in Bahrain. We can promote and campaign for decent work and for education for all in this globalised world. As individual

unions or sectors within the larger general unions we can create links with unions in the developing countries to assist with organisation or training. Small amounts of money spent on strategic matters could be of tremendous benefit. At home raising the awareness of our own members is also critical and there is a great education programme and Fiona Dunne is behind the organisation of that programme, and is available and can be built on and I will finish with this. The Global Solidarity Summer School will be in Dublin on the 23rd and 24th August. The theme – 100 years of Lock-Out, Learning from the Past to Shape the Future, I hope it will be as successful this year as it was in previous years and we are building on the numbers and hoping that we have 100 people this year. May be I will see you there, please support the motion.

Brian Moore, NISPA

President, Congress, Brian Moore NISPA to fully support the motion. Recent experience of history the motion sets about, well we already have mainstream global solidarity within ICTU, but from 2008 onwards that has only happened really in the southern part of the island. You have a Global Solidarity Committee and the excellent work that it continues to do and that needs to be reinforced by the impact of this motion in taking it forward, but unfortunately, why you always rely on project funding to provide the main resource for the work of Global Solidarity you are always a hostage to fortune. As we have found out in the NICICTU part of ICTU – we had a Global Solidarity Committee just as vibrant, doing just as good work and we worked in cooperation with the Republic's Global Solidarity Committee and we worked together for a long time. But, when the project funding ended in 2008 we lost our Project Officer. Basically everything fell apart and the only global solidarity work done by and large in the North is through the individual unions through NIPSA, UNISON, UNITE and others but we really seriously need, if we are taking this forward, we hope that the lesson learned and the work being done through the Dublin Committee will also impact on the NICICTU Executive as well. Although it is not relevant to this conference but we will talk about it again. We need to reinvigorate the committees both North and South – let's have a bit of international solidarity within ourselves before we try to do it elsewhere. So, while we are very positive about this motion and the work of it, it is about that lack on the whole island of Ireland that we haven't got that true international global solidarity to the extent that we should have it and continue to have it. We have heard a lot at this conference about global economy, global issues that impact on the unions and the threats to unions. Well the way we can fight that as already has been said is through our activists and our members being aware of the issues and being educated in the issues and that is what we need to continue to do, support the motion.

Eugene Quinn, PSEU

Eugene Quinn, PSEU fully supporting the motion and what I want to say, delegates, is that solidarity is not just about the rights of workers and the rights of workers to organise, it is the right of disable people and to protect and ensure that disabled people are assimilated into the workforce and I would commend the work of John Coughlan of the NUJ who has spearheaded Disability Aid abroad and our union is very proud to have been supportive of John in relation to his work in dealing with disabled people in Tanzania, now in Uganda and going forward in three other East African countries – Rwanda, but the work of this solidarity committee is very much down to the people who are on that committee and the people who are on that committee are very, very dedicated. And what I can say to delegates here is that it should be a fully-fledged committee of Congress because the people who work on it and John who is Chair and Mick who is Vice-Chair are very, very dedicated, so I commend the motion to you.

Eamon McMahon, UNISON

Brothers and sisters, delegates, Eamon McMahon, UNISON delegate and member of Trade Union Friends of Palestine. I am up here to support the motion and also I am speaking to the section of the report on Global Solidarity as well. I am going to start by reading a section; those of you who come to the Trade Union Friends of Palestine Fringe this evening at 5.45 will get a free copy of this report pamphlet just hot off the press, it is the findings of the final session of the Russell Tribunal which has been holding hearings for the last four years. These are people with high status of the world in terms of moral authority. People like Lord Anthony Gifford, Michael Mansfield, Roger Waters from Pink Floyd and John Dougart, Professor of Law. Their findings are that Israel is guilty of the crime of socioside which will be explained this evening and also guilty of apartheid within Israel and aggravated apartheid within the occupied territories. Some of you or some who are a bit my age might remember the Russell Tribunal in Vietnam was one of the most seminal events in terms of international civil society challenging the outrageous atrocities committed against the Vietnamese people. Well a couple of days before he died, Russell said this, the development of the crisis in the Middle East is both dangerous and destructive. Just a couple of days before he died, he was 97, I think, his final thoughts in his life and the world in which he fought for peace and justice all his life, these were his final thought For 20 years Israel has expanded by force of arms. After every stage in this expansion Israel has appealed to reason and has suggested negotiations. This is a traditional role of imperial power because it wishes to consolidate with the least difficulty with what it has already taken by violence. Every new conquest becomes a new basis of the proposed negotiations from strength but ignores the injustice of the previous aggression. The aggression committed by Israel must be condemned not only because no State has a right to annex foreign territory but because every expansion of an experiment to discover how much more aggression the world will tolerate. And, he goes on to say how much longer the world is willing to endure this spectacle of want and cruelty. And you know folks we have become immune to it. This is one of the most dangerous things that is happening at the present time. We saw the class thing in Gaza over Christmas in 2008 and 2009 when over 1,400 civilians in the most densely populated civilian area in the world were bombed and it wasn't precision bombing, they were just bombed to smithereens and it was done in the eyes of the world. We saw it happening. Tanks went flying with illegal weapons into Gaza. Gaza was held under a medieval type siege, I am not going to go into it because you know about it, but we have the ethnic cleansing of East Jerusalem. We have the plan to evacuate 43,000 Bedouin from their traditional homeland outside Israel into ghettos that are being made for them, just like what they did to the American Indians; I see the red light is going here. What can we do? We have organisations like G4S which are responsible for the fortification for the prisons that are torturing people and half the elected representatives in Israel have been put in prison. We have got Viola, those of you who work in the public sector have got Plackard that the Quakers are now boycotting sitting at our desk. Now we can mobilise to have the polity to actively and vigorously boycott divestment and I would call in terms of the section of the report, I would call for us to be more active in this campaign, thank you.

Patricia McKeown, UNISON

Thank you Chair. Patricia McKeown, UNISON speaking on the section of the report on Columbia. One of those significant developments in the Columbian peace process involves the Irish trade union movement and I think not being properly reflected in our annual report although the Executive and the Northern Ireland Committee are aware. I reported in Killarney two years ago that an initiative was possible and that we were being encouraged by Justice for Columbia to put a Northern Ireland cross party delegation along with the trade union movement to go there given that the Columbian Government has express some desire to see if lessons could be learned from our own experience. And it did seem remote to two years ago but it happened in November last year. I cannot underestimate how important that visit was

and what happened subsequently. It was headlines in Columbia – the trade union movement and the political parties jointly addressed both the Senate and the Columbian Congress, televised live to millions of people and although we have all sorts of problems with how our own political parties behave here and their response to our peace process, I have to say I was proud of the fact that they did pull together with like messages. What we witnessed, and the trade union delegation were Pamela Dooley and Brian Campfield, respectively Chair and Vice Chair of the Northern Ireland Committee respectively and myself and what we witnessed there was capitalism without any control whatsoever. All of the dead trade unionists we have been campaigning about for so long – they get killed because if they try to stop the privatisation of health services, they try to stop the sell-off of their oil industry, they try to stop the sell-off of their mines and the natural mineral resources – that is what they get killed for, the kind of things that would be our day job. Most recently we have enabled our politicians to go to Havana to meet the FARC, think about it. We sent unionists, nationalists and republicans to go to meet the FARC just four short weeks ago and that is because we had met the Columbian Government and we weren't prepared to meet just one side of the peace process, we wanted balance too. That has happened. That has been headlines again across Columbia and indeed Central and Southern America. For all the problems we are facing and I will talk about these later in our own motion, I do have to pay tribute to the parties in Northern Ireland who have come together. And, even those who were anti-trade union when they met us on the delegation, the now have a different view of the world since they have found out what being an ordinary trade unionist in a country like Columbia, which by the way, which has all sorts of human rights and equality clauses written into its constitution and calls itself a democracy but now we know that if you speak out on behalf of ordinary people, that is a death sentence. So, I do want to commend not just Columbia, I want to commend Columbians for peace who are very rare parliamentarians who have made this happen. This story will run and run. We have just started and this is why I would encourage other affiliates to become involved. We need the resources to be able to continue with this very important work.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

No other speakers? Can I put Motion 10 to you – those in favour – agreed.

Section 6 - is that agreed?

Thank you. Can I call upon Bernadette Ségol to come and address conference. Bernadette, of course, is no stranger. She has been with us on a number of occasions and she has always enlightened us with her views and we look forward to hearing from her. Thank you, Bernadette.

Bernadette Ségol, General Secretary, ETUC

Thank you President. Dear friends, a very good morning to all of you in this room. I am bringing to you the very warm greetings of the European Trade Union Confederation of which the ICTU has been a loyal, constructive member since our foundation 40 years ago. I know of course that the Irish trade union movement has been around for quite a bit longer time because you celebrated here the centenary of the Lock-Out, the turning point in the creation of your modern movement. But even now your struggle continues for the full application of your trade union rights to collective bargaining. And, this is true in the Republic of Ireland but the unfortunate fact is that in Britain and in many other European countries we all see violations of such fundamental rights.

The crisis has indeed provided the opportunity for some Governments under the guise of structural agenda to attack the rights that European workers have been able to build up for

years. And, it is certain that some of our political leaders would never miss an opportunity of a good crisis to attack us.

The social situation in the EU has been steadily deteriorating. Some countries are being hit more seriously than others, certainly Ireland, but austerity policies are widespread in and out of the Eurozone. I am not going to dwell on the analysis of the crisis. You know them better than most and I have read David's introduction to the economy – it is a brilliant one – and you know that it was financial capitalism based on greed that went into melt-down in 2008. And the recent revelation about the Anglo-Irish indeed shows the degree of contempt that these people hold for normal society and that is terrible. Yes, the banks were rescued but it was at a huge social cost. Interest rate levels made it possible for some countries to get out, make it impossible for countries to get out of a vicious circle and the industrial fabric in many countries is crumbling as corporations seem to have gone on an investment strike. But, friend, there are two things we are absolutely sure of. First the people that are paying for this crisis are not the ones that caused it and second, the economic and political decisions which were and are being taken are wrong in fact and morally. They are based on demonstrably flawed socio-scientific model and these policies have failed. I want to be clear. The ETUC is indeed fully aware of the importance of sound national accounts but we strongly oppose the policies implemented to that end. They have resulted and they still result in soaring unemployment now reaching unsustainable levels and particularly for young people. The figures that have been published this week show that the unemployment rate in Ireland is at 13.6 per cent and therefore for young people under 25 years it is twice as much. Now this is a disaster for this generation. The situation is even worse in countries like Slovakia, Cyprus, Portugal, Greece and Spain. These countries are really caught in a vicious circle of recession and more austerity.

We had at the beginning of June our Mid-term Conference in Dublin just a few weeks ago and again thank you for the support of the ICTU and the very warm welcome we received in Dublin. And the conclusions of this conference were that the current policies threaten the social fabric and these policies must change. What we need to do in Social Europe is to fight unemployment, a different policy. We need investment in good jobs and this would be the virtuous circle which could help us to exit the crisis by the high road. In this conference in June we decided to look at what is possible drawing up the new European recovery plan that takes into account the specificities of national circumstances with a European framework and this would be based on solidarity, a word which is very dear to this trade union movement. This is not an easy task. We have to be realistic. We will look at all available financing possibilities from the public as well as the private sector and both combined of course.

David made an introductory to our conference and he pointed out to the cash pile, the cash which is piling up, I have a figure of €7,000bn, now I don't know how many zeroes you have after the 7 but this is too many for my imagination but it is thousands, thousands, millions, millions that corporate Europe is sitting upon and this is un-invested. Now friends there must be a way of bringing this back into the productive economy. There must be a way to use this money to create the best results for European wealth and for jobs. We have been campaigning also for the financial transaction tax and we have been rather successful but it is now under threat the decision to go for this financial transaction tax is now under stress. It is attacked by the very secret society, the secret society of the central banker, who wants to make it a useless event rather than a non-event. Unfortunately, friends and President, nowadays the focus on social progress, the focus on the idea that people come first, people come first seems to be off the radar of our political leadership. But, political leaders they must understand that economy is not the science operating in a social vacuum, that economic policies must be implemented and for the people. And this is why about a year ago we together, unanimously, in the ETUC presented our Social Compact for Europe. Our proposals are still on the table. There have been some very encouraging reactions but we need action

from political leaders. Last week in Brussels I had the opportunity to address all of them – all of the 27 Heads of State and Governments during the year at the European Council and that was the very first in European history. Of course your Taoiseach was there and it was a very successful Irish Presidency. I am afraid that my own power of persuasion has failed to move them. The conclusions were practically void of new thinking. In December, 2012, they promised to advance a social policy with a road map in the context of social dialogue but nothing has come of it. There were also to take initiatives on youth unemployment. Really nothing new has emerged and at their meeting today there is a big event in Berlin that is meant to tackle the issue. I hope I am wrong but quite frankly that really likes an event linked to national politics praising the European process and it seems to me that we do have to wait for a warmer wind from Berlin next September. I would say that I fear it is like waiting for Godot.

The European Council did produce some words about a new initiative in investment and we can take it as a verbal response to our demands, and they know about the benefits of a European industrial policy. I have encouraged them but the fact is that little concrete is on the table measured against the task of that ahead of us. There has also been some signs recently that austerity policies are being reined in to the extent that these are being applied in a more flexible manner in some countries. But despite this straw in the wind, it may well be too late for many of us unless urgent action is taken to restore confidence in the European Union project.

I have to say, President and friends, the ETUC has always been supportive of the European project. And, primarily because this regional integration model aimed not only at economic integration but was also meant to foster social progress and full employment and that is written into the treaty, we shouldn't forget that. We remain absolutely convinced that potentially the European Union is a project investing in for us to deal with the globalisation of the economy. It is by far better than re-nationalisation of economies which would not lead to more and better jobs. On the contrary, we would be forced to compete against each other even more in a declining spiral.

Friends, our European model is made of social protection, public services and social dialogue, and this social model not a model of the past but it is a model for decent work for a better future. It is rightly the model of your country and I would really like it to be the model of the European Union. We are working and campaigning hard to influence the future of Europe for the benefit of its citizens and we will be pressing the point strongly during the European Parliament election campaign which will take place next year at the end of May. I know that we can count on the Irish trade union movement to continue to strongly intervene to promote the ETUC demands for a social Europe. We must make sure that people's understandable anger that now turned them towards the right-wing populists that we see in too many of our countries.

Friends, Congress was always an active and constructive member of the European Trade Union Confederation in the past. And, I wish to thank you for that. And thanks to you David for your friendly support. I wish each of you unions and the ICTU all the best and I am certainly confident about our common future. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Bernadette, thank you. Can I call on our General Secretary to say a few words of thanks.

David Begg, General Secretary

Bernadette, on behalf of conference I want to thank you very much for coming to us today and for your excellent address. In the past six months, I suppose, I have had the honour of working

very closely with you by virtue of the Irish Presidency. The structures of the European Union are such that there is a trilateral series of discussions which is called the macro-economic and the social dialogue and by virtue of the Irish Presidency, myself and the Irish employers have been part of that discussion and I have seen how Bernadette communicates to the top people in the ETUC, to Barosso and Van Rompuy the concern of the workers of Europe and I can say that whatever failings there are in European policy, they are not due to being misinformed because she is capable of sticking it to Barosso and Van Rompuy and those people in the most direct and unequivocal terms and we are very lucky to have her advocacy on our behalf in Europe. She is a person of enormous standing internationally. She was just recently awarded the French Legion of Honour from President Hollande which is testament to her. I think leading the ETUC is quite a difficult task. I remember asking John Monks when he took over what he thought of it and he said – it took me 20 years to figure out the politics of the TUC but it will probably take me 40 to figure out the politics of the ETUC. It is a very difficult task and they have a tremendous leader in Bernadette. It is a great coincidence that she is a woman, she is a very powerful woman, a great advocate of the working class and I have been privileged to work with her and I admire her greatly.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Just before you leave us Bernadette, we are starting a new tradition that the Irish Congress of Trade Unions are going to give their guests a memento of their visit. This is a miniature of a sculpture commemorating comrades in the Spanish Civil War. It was done by a local artist, the original was unveiled in Writers Square in the Cathedral quarter of Belfast. There were three international brigadiers present and at that occasion Jack Doyle and Jack Jones two of them and of course Michael O’Riordan, so on behalf of Congress – it is donated by UNITE the Union, thanks Jimmy. Bernadette, will you accept it?

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Before we move on can I just make a couple of announcements. Can I call on Eamon Lawless, John Kelleher, Kate Varley, Billy Hannigan, Paddy Kavanagh and Liam Gallagher, the Scrutineers, to meet in Room 1 at 10.45 please. Just to remind you that there is a fringe meeting on Global Solidarity which will be held in the Boardroom immediately after the morning session. And in compliance with the decision of Standing Orders, Grahame Smith of the Scottish TUC will be addressing conference this morning before the close of business. And, you have also got around the tables this morning the leaflet on the tenement experience – that was mentioned by Sally Anne. Can you make sure that you book it on line so that we can have a big trade union attendance and learn from the experience.

We are going to now move into the Northern Ireland debate. It is going to be introduced by Peter Bunting. It appears that we have got our Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness with us to speak to us this morning. Just in introducing the debate, it is important to note that the news last night of the loss of jobs in Ulster Bank has been a dreadful blow to some of the comrades in this room and I think it was unfortunate to have to listen to Sammy Wilson on the radio this morning making apologies for Ulster Bank and the way they behaved. I think it is time he started standing up for the workers. Peter.

Peter Bunting, Assistant General Secretary

Chair, comrades, Conference, in introducing the ‘Building for Peace’ section of the Executive Council Report it is a most appropriate time to bring to your attention how Northern Ireland stands 15 years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement and its acceptance by democratic votes in both jurisdictions of the island. We should be a society at ease with itself, peace with its neighbours and sharing the benefits of the peace dividend. We should be more equal, respectful of the diversity of cultures with a strong Bill of Rights offering comprehensive protections and rights for all of our citizens. We should have an education

system dedicated to the formation of independent minded and active citizenship. A citizenship respectful of difference possessed of the necessary skills for productive work in a modern global economy. We should have sustainable public services essential for the full development of all people regardless of their age, gender or ethnicity or perceived ability or background. The quality of those services should be accountable to the public which use them and deliver them. The politicians we elect to the Northern Ireland Assembly are ultimately responsible for the quality and retention of those services in the public sector. But 15 years on from Good Friday in 1998, we sit in a fine building in the middle of Belfast where a short walk in any direction will within minutes remind us of the wasted potential of that hopeful dawn. The new day which offered so much hope but in the end has failed to deliver. The progressive promises of the agreement have instead turned regressive in too many ways. Sectarianism is worse than ever. Segregation is not challenged. Where neutrals pace is the buss word it is not a shared space. The sarcastically entitled Peace Walls are higher to climb. A society where rows persist on annual basis for who has the right to march or protest. Youth unemployment is higher than at the time of the signing of the agreement. Public services are under threat of privatisation. The vulnerable are having their essential benefits removed. Residence of care homes are facing eviction. The promise of delivering a comprehensive Bill of Rights has being reneged upon. The securitcrats are still utilising regression as a vehicle for defeating dissident activity. Both are strongly opposed by the trade union movement. Repression in the context of administrative detention/determent always has and always will act as a recruitment tool for those blinkered enough to pursue the idiocy of violent means for political ends.

The recent arrest of John Downey also falls into this category and inhibits those of us working at the coal face for peace and reconciliation. The enactment of what is called 'Ann's Law' recently is a blatant disregard of an agreement of the reintegration of our society of approximately 30,000 ex-prisoners from the conflict. An agreement which was negotiated between all ex-prisoner groups, ICTU, the CBI and other social partners and chaired by the then head of the civil service, Sir Nigel Hamilton and his successor Bruce Robinson. Furthermore, Ann's Law creates a hierarchy of victimhood. We deserve better than this. The movement was in the vanguard of the civil rights movement in the early 1960s and if its policies then had been implemented, we may have escaped 40 years of butchery and mayhem.

Our movement supported the Belfast Agreement which came after years of campaigning from unions and other organisations who argued that the political demand of the main parties were unrealistic and the methods advocated to further the aims of those parties were irresponsible, undemocratic and too often lethal. This movement consistently argued that peace and political stability were the priority but not the end point. We made the case that human rights were in the interest of and would benefit all citizens and that discrimination not only blighted the lives the direct victims but poisoned the well from which we all drank. We lobbied and we campaigned. We marched and we rallied and we stood in silence for those who were slain. And we did this yet again early this year for prison officer David Black. The talks that led to the agreement include more than the big four political parties. There were ten parties in that room. Central to the talks were trade unionists and other civil society groups advocating the kind of agreement which emerged, and which would be fit for all and premise on rights and equality. The referendum was completely supported and promoted in every work place by the trade union movement. When the political class let us down repeatedly, we regrouped and called to the restoration for devolved and accountable Government. We did so the last time the BDC met in this city in 2005. One year later we issued a statement saying, and I quote, we in the trade union movement sincerely believe that people we have democratically elected are individually, collectively capable of addressing the challenges of Government. We contend that the wishes of the people of Northern Ireland is to be governed fairly by

politicians who are accountable to the electorate which they serve. The future shape of the economy and our society is currently being decided by direct rule ministers and the prevalence of our globalised environment. It is right and proper that we have our say in our present and our future.

Let me make this clear – I am not knocking devolution and I acknowledge the difficulty of coalition Governments for all political parties. I acknowledge that things could be worse under direct rule – we certainly would have had household water charges following a privatised water service for example. Let us not kid ourselves about how working families would have fared under the direct rule of Cameron and Osbourne, who would probably have treated us as a social experiment with no electoral consequences for the Tories, just as Thatcher's Government imposed the poll tax on Scotland before its failed implementation in England. But, the fact remains Conference, devolved Government in Stormont has not worked for working people as well as it could have and should have. You will hear at this conference the impact of cuts coming from Her Majesty's Treasury. More announced last week affecting the pay of thousands of public sector workers. The announcement yesterday by the private sector of cuts and redundancies in Ulster Bank. The next blow on the horizon for public sector workers is the reform of their pensions ensuring that they will pay more, work longer and receive less. The welfare state is in the middle of enormous upheaval causing great distress to the poorest and most vulnerable again in the name of reform.

By the way, isn't it funny how reform of powerful institutions such as casino banks or indeed corporate media can be put off for years. Reform for the unemployed and those on benefits and the working poor must happen urgently. In defence, defenders of the Northern Ireland Executive will say they have no choice as all of the fiscal leavers which are based in London and in the Treasury are based there and if they don't implement these, the Treasury will take money from the Northern Ireland block grant if they fail to do their bidding. Besides they will say, the Stormont administration is mitigating the worst of the bad ideas coming from Conservative central office such as water charges and the bedroom tax, to which we can only reply, what are you doing to challenge these and their dangerous agenda of reversing five decades of legislation, especially workers' rights which our Assembly has autonomy to change and improve. Why are the First and Deputy First Prime Minister not continuing to work with devolved administrations in Edinburgh and Cardiff as they did for a brief moment in 2010 when they all collectively condemned the austerity emanating from Westminster. Why are they not implementing vital parts of the equality agenda which will not cost anything in budgetary terms but would make real fundamental changes in the relationship between the citizens and the State. Why are we still tolerating the scandal of schools where children are segregated by faith at the age of four and social class at the age of eleven? They abolished the State run Level Plus, in fact the Deputy First Minister was the Minister for Education who very welcomingly abolished the State run Level Plus but we still today tolerate two privatised versions in order to propagate the myth of grammar school superiority, while one child in five leaves the education system functionally illiterate. There are not enough third level places in Northern Ireland so thousands of our brightest are exported at eighteen, most destined never to return. For those who stay and graduate here there are not enough jobs for their qualifications, so we export thousands more each year. We look at Stormont and we watch the Northern Executive and we observe from our firm status by the way, as outsiders, what resembles a series of power-grabs and cartel like deals in which power is shared out. On planning, on community relations, on economic policy, on education, on employment rights even on the freedom of the press, it is unclear who's side the Executive is on. It gives me no pleasure to state this but decisions are being made in Stormont which are not being imposed from Westminster and which are not in the best interests of working people and their families. A cynical acquaintance of mine refers to our Assembly as a wonderful means but an expensive means of managing apartheid.

And so it places us in a certain political role. This trade union movement and our allies and friends who have campaigned alongside us in recent years on education cuts, welfare cuts, human rights, social justice, environmental protection, dealing with the past and other real issues that affect thousands of ordinary lives, we comrades are the opposition. In Stormont we do not have the structure to accommodate opposition as every other parliament in the free world. As a result this has led the opposition to bad ideas with an enforced consensus such as water charges, the bedroom tax and treating the G8 circus as a marketing opportunity for Fermanagh tourism. Instead we organised protests and also debates and venues for the real issues of global injustice enshrined and reinforced by gatherings such as the G8. We should remember that there are arguments that we do win. Few with more significance than that principled opposition to cutting corporation tax and making the case for targeted investment rather than the blunder-bus tactic of the tax cuts for the rich. We can utilise European social funding to offset the huge costs of youth unemployment and guarantee productive position for each young person giving them the skills, the confidence, the expertise they need to play a full role in our prosperity. To do that and to attract investment the last thing we need is a pointless and xenophobic referendum on EU membership across the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. We have public sector assets being utilised to leverage investment in a Green New Deal, which serves the construction and manufacturing sectors and contributes to our part in combatting climate change. We have over £3 billion of housing stock which should remain the property of the public sector – don't privatise First Minister, Deputy First Minister, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. We can use social clauses and community benefits to ensure that the proceeds of over £3 billion of annual public procurement supports the local private sector and is not syphoned off to tax havens by private equity funds and PFI merchants. We can also ensure that every worker employed by a contractor funded by public money is paid a living wage. Low pay is a scandal and the consequences visible with empty and abandoned shops in every village and town across Northern Ireland, even those by the way, the ones front painted like dolls houses in grim streets.

All these proposals have been studied, costed and advocated by our friends in the Nevin Economic Institute and they have made more sense that grandiose plans including corporation tax. All of the above are predicated on our Assembly and Executive delivering a progressive future for all - one of big realisation of the fundamentals in the Good Friday Agreement – peace, justice, stability, equality. It is only through this realisation that our society will move in to the 21st century. To this end, the signatories to the Good Friday Agreement, the US Government, the British Government, the Irish Government and the Republic of Ireland and the European Union, need to fulfil their obligations and ensure that those who wish to hold back Northern Ireland do not prevail. The experience of recent years has demonstrated that the political class which has developed in Stormont requires regular auditing by the co-signatories to the agreement. This must ensure that when we reach the next milestone anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in five years' time, we can have something worthy to celebrate. Our role is to ensure completion and implementation of the agreement. Fairness, equality, prosperity, opportunity and justice are the hallmarks of the agreement in words and spirit. Our business is the unfinished business of 1998, let us complete this task comrades. I commend the section of the report.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks very much Peter. I am going to call on our guest, Deputy First Minister to address conference and can I just remind you that over the years Martin has given his time to attend our conferences, both the ICTU Biennial Conference and also the Northern Ireland Committee Conference when he has had the opportunity. You are very welcome Martin.

Guest Speaker

Martin McGuinness, Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, MP, MLA

Go raibh maith agat Eugene, thank you very much for the invitation to come along. It is a delight to be here, it is always a great honour for me to come and speak to unions who have the interests of working people at heart. Tá áthas mor orm anseo libh ar maidin. Can I say also that I am delighted that we are here in the General Assembly Buildings of the Presbyterian Church – I was here just not so long ago with Peter Robinson and the church leaders and one of the great experiences of my life over the course of the last twenty years has been the friendships that I have built up and all of the Protestant churches here in the North. Some of the people I have met and worked with are of the highest calibre and in my opinion are very inspirational people who have played a major part in building the peace process to the point where it is today.

I want to commend John Douglas on his election as President of the ICTU – a wonderful wise decision, the General Secretary of the MANDATE union and elevated to high office. And I am very conscious that Peter was the warm up act. Peter and I are good friends, don't worry about that. I think we understand the context in which we are involved in and it is not easy. I want to actually turn to the very terrible decision yesterday of Ulster Bank to effectively put hundreds of people on to the dole. I am very conscious of the problems that presents for all of us given the absolute disgraceful, almost all of the banks in the course of recent times, epitomised by the appalling tapes which we have heard over the last ten days where you effectively have banker bosses laughing while the people of Ireland suffer.

I am very conscious of the ICTU is an All-Island body representing hundreds of thousands of workers right across this island. Trade union leaders and political leaders, North and South, given the circumstances in which we are all living in – the terrible world economic recession we have seen over the last five years, are faced with very, very hard choices. We have to make the right choices, ones which are right for ourselves, right for the unemployed, right for the less well off, right for workers and right for the economy. As an Irish Republican I am very conscious that I live in a partitioned island and I am one who wants the unity of all the people who live in this island. I passionately want to see an anti-sectarian, I want to see an anti-inequality, I want to unite people over social and economic interests for all, a comprehensive Bill of Rights for the North and an All-Ireland Charter as we were promised in the Good Friday Agreement and is in the domain of others to deliver, I think we guarantee this. We need to ensure that we do everything we can to help those who are most in need as we are facing tough times. I absolutely agree with the message 'austerity doesn't work'. We must continue to build peace and we must continue to bring prosperity for all of our people.

We are developing a strategy for growth and investment but we have to challenge ourselves to do that both in the Assembly and the Executive and the Assembly does have a duty as Peter has rightly said to deliver real change. It has a duty to challenge sectarianism and division and improve the quality of people's lives and reduced poverty – eliminate poverty – and inequality. Of course to do that we need sustainable jobs - we need well paid jobs. We need to ensure that workers are properly protected. We need strong, effective and robust employment rights. This year is the centenary of the 1913 Lock-out – a seminal moment in the struggle of rights and of course then it was a different island but many of the same challenges

remain. So, we need strong political leaders, strong active and challenging trade unions working together. I believe we can change this island for the better.

So, fifteen years on from the Good Friday Agreement we are absolutely committed to lasting peace and prosperity for all. I am very conscious that there are still people out there, people who describe themselves as extreme Unionists and people who are so called extreme Republicans who would like to plunge us back to the past, but have no intention of going to the past and I don't believe that they will ever have the ability to take us there. So, as we move forward relationships will inevitably have pressure points but this current Executive has been up and running for six years. I was part of an Executive from 1999 until October 2002 as Minister for Education where the institutions collapsed on three occasions. I was interested in listing to what I thought was an awful interview from Bishop Donal McKeown in the course of the last number of days where he talked about the Good Friday Agreement was supposed to put people who were in the centre ground in charge of politics. I am very proud of the fact that the central ground did have that opportunity and the institutions collapsed three times. I have been working with Peter Robinson and Ian Paisley for the last six years and the institutions have never collapsed during the course of those six years and I think that is something to be proud of. And, Peter Robinson and I are more determined than ever to work together for the good of all of our people. I think it is important to give credit where credit is due. We have different political ideologies, we have different allegiances but we do have the ability to recognise that we are facing an unique opportunity to bring eight centuries of conflict in this country to an end and I think we have been successfully doing that during the course of recent times. But we continue to face considerable challenges within what remains a very tough economic, social and political environment. With financial resources and infinite demands, tough decisions do have to be taken. Through devolution I think we are much better placed to listen to the needs of people and work towards building a better future – a shared future for all. Democracy, peace and creating opportunities remain absolutely central to everything that we do and since 2007, our Executive has invested nearly £8 billion sterling and attracted more inward investment in the last six years than at any other time in the history of the Northern Ireland State. But we have been caught in the eye of a global recession and we are very determined to do everything we can to create opportunities for all of our people and we know that many families are dealing with unemployment, rising living costs, for some the spectre of immigration, these are brothers, sisters' sons and daughters across the globe. Growing the economy is our key target to create jobs and the opportunities for people to earn a living and to provide for their families. We have identified growing the economy through inward investment as a key lever and we will leave no stone unturned as we continue to identify new markets and promote the north of Ireland. I think we have a lot to offer potential investors with a very skilled and highly educated workforce and indeed with all of its problems, a really splendid education system which is still undergoing a process of change.

We have recently had the G8 leaders here and I think that did a number of things. Number one it sent a very powerful message to the world about how this place has changed, how this place has been changed for the better in terms of an end of conflict. And that is important if we are to attract foreign direct investors. But it also showed the incredible contribution made by those who protested against the G8 around many issues about which I feel equally strong – world conflict, world hunger, tax evasion, all of these big issues and I want to pay tribute to the trade union movement and pay tribute to all of those protestors in a very peaceful and democratic way sent a very powerful message to the world that the world leaders do have a duty and a responsibility to bring conflict, hunger and inequality and justice to an end. And even in the aftermath of that, and I know it is not really anything to do with any of us although we have to be concerned about what is happening in places like Afghanistan, but the decision to at long last after three years of quite clearly behind the scenes discussions between the top

Taliban and the US Government, the now public admission that full frontal face to face talks are going to take place over the course of the coming days, I think it is a welcome development and I would like to see that many others are learning the lessons that were learnt in this part of the world many years ago.

So, I think what we have to do is that we have to continue to work to promote good relations across all parts of our community which I think an essential ingredient of building a prosperous, peaceful and safe society enriched by diversity and welcoming to all. Specifically, tackling the twin blights of sectarianism and racism in addition to other forms of intolerance is key in shaping a shared and cohesive community that can move forward and collectively face the challenges of an ever changing world.

Our vision is an united community based on equality of opportunity, a desirability of good relations and reconciliation, one which is strengthened by its diversity where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn and socialise together free from prejudice, free from hate and free from intolerance. We have recently presented 'Together Building an united Community' strategy. In developing this strategy we listened carefully to the wide range of detailed views and we moving from policy development to implementation. We have already announced major new cross-community initiatives around education, housing, sport, youth, volunteering and interface barriers, together building united community strategy outlines of visions based on equality of opportunity, desirability of good relations and reconciliation. It provides a framework for Government action in tackling sectarianism, racism and other forms of intolerance while seeking to address the vision, hate and separation. We have agreed a proposed way forward that will involve the establishment of an all-party group to consider and make recommendations on matters including parades and protests, flags, symbols and emblems and related matters, and indeed dealing with, and I think just as importantly, learning from the past.

Government cannot achieve this shared vision alone. Everyone has a role to play and we want to build on what has been achieved by individuals and groups at local level. Fantastic work has taken place right across the North and right across interfaces at local level and I want to pay tribute to all of those people in the Unionist, Loyalist, Nationalist and Republican communities who absolutely believe in the peace process and are doing everything in their power to ensure that we move forward in peaceful ways. So, we want to move away from division and build a shared future with a stable, economic outlook. Investment in health, tourism, roads and education infrastructure is vital if we are to see the North of Ireland develop and regenerate and since 2007, the Executive has been delivering for local people and the health of our people remains of paramount importance. We have made significant investment in healthcare facilities with a £270 million south west acute hospital in Enniskillen which was opened last year and is now treating not just people from Co Fermanagh but people from Co Monaghan, from Co Cavan and absolutely argues for the need for us to increase North South working, All-Island working in ways which will bring benefit to all our people. Also, the £64 million investment in the new Down hospital. We have also invested £70 million in sixty new ambulances and £26 million in fire appliances, fire-fighting equipment and fire stations and of course the new facility in Desert Crete which we hope will be built shortly will also be a centre of excellence for all of the emergency services. The Executive has established the Historical Institutional Abuse enquiry team to investigate the needs of survivors of historical institutional abuse and the enquiry team has been working closely with survivors of abuse and we are very determined to ensure that there is justice for everyone. Significant investment in road infrastructure has been made both locally and across the North of Ireland and in 2008, the Executive introduced free travel here in the North for people over 60 years of age. This has been retained during the lifetime of this Executive which is a significant

benefit to people saving them money and encouraging more people onto public transport. We have also major plans for road improvements and of course we did intend to proceed with the £330 million A5 dual carriageway but this has now been delayed a legal challenge which has left farmers with uncertainty and denied companies the work which would have led to much needed jobs in the construction industry. But the problem that prevented them going forward hopefully will be resolved over the course of the coming months and Peter Robinson and I at the meeting of the Committee of the Offices of the First and Deputy First Ministers just a few days ago made it clear that we are determined to ring-fence some money to ensure that the A5 road, which is important for the link to Dublin but also important for people west of the Bann for the link to Belfast, to go ahead.

We are also addressing the legacy of underinvestment in our water and sewerage systems and we have pumped millions of pounds into improving this infrastructure. NI Water now delivers the best drinking water quality the North has ever enjoyed and we have achieved this without introducing domestic charges for water. We have also controlled the cost of educating our young people by not increasing student fees making university education more assessable. While there are still challenges ahead in addressing all educational needs of our children and young people, our successes have been recognised in a recent study. An international study has found that local primary school pupils are ranked the highest performance in the English speaking region in both reading and writing, ranked 5th out of forty countries in numeracy, ranks 6th out of fifty countries and 19% of pupils in reading and 24% in mathematics are performing at the advanced international benchmark compared with the international averages of 8% and 4% respectively.

So, we continue to attract foreign direct investment and support the expansion of local companies creating much needed jobs and boosting our economy. Last year Invest NI promoted 6,485 jobs, supporting over 2,200 local company expansions and secured 24 new investments from international investors. Our visits to the United States have delivered significant inward investment from companies such as the New York Stock Exchange, City Group, Dow Chemicals, Universal HBO, Chicago Mercantile and we have supported thirty trade missions during the year to countries as diverse as Kurdistan and Russia, China and Brazil. Tourism is a key market for us and we have invested £80 million in the Titanic Signature Building which is a world class visitor attraction. This exhibition has attracted over 800,000 visitors from 128 countries across the world has generated millions of pounds to the economy in the North. We have also invested £18.5 million in the Giant's Causeway Visitors Centre which also opened its doors last year to local and international visitors. In my own city we have invested £30 million in the Derry City of Culture Celebrations for 2013, we hope you are all going to come to the Fleadh which will for the first time be held in the North of Ireland and in my city next month and will be an absolutely amazing occasion. We want to make a success of this culture year and deliver long-term social and cultural benefits for Derry and right across the North West including into Co Donegal. The City of Culture 2013 is a culmination of ambition and hard work by the people and organisations across the whole city of Derry. And, just to tell you about an event that happened there a couple of weeks ago. The Radio 1 big weekend came to Ebrington site. Ebrington is a redundant military base, the largest military base in Northern Ireland, now under my department's control and we have spent millions on the City of Culture and the Ebrington site and if you stand on the Ebrington site now and look across the peace bridge at the refurbished Guild Hall, you would believe you are in a different city from Derry was even five years ago. The change that that has brought has been absolutely phenomenal. The peace bridge represents a new iconic image of the city. We had 50,000 young people on the Ebrington site from every part of the North of Ireland, Catholics, Protestants, young people who didn't believe in anything and probably many others who believed in all sorts of other different religions, they were Unionists, Loyalists, Nationalists and Republicans, there wasn't even the hint of trouble because young people are

absolutely up for this peace process and understand that sectarianism and division is not going to get them a job and isn't going to build them a future. And I want to pay tribute to these young people – they get an awful lot of criticism at times – but I think our young people are absolutely amazing. I was very privileged at having a visit yesterday from Hannah Nelson. Hannah spoke in introducing Mrs Obama and the President when they came to the Waterfront Hall. I told her, and I have also told the media this, there were three speeches made in the Waterfront Hall, for me her speech was the best speech made that day. She was a fantastic ambassador for your young people and she pointed the way for all of us in terms of where we need to go in a united society.

So, we are moving forward and we are going to build a peace and conflict resolution centre funded by the peace programme. There is controversy about it now. Those forces who are opposed to peace are lining up against the construction of this site. I think it will be a valuable international resource where the experience of our peace process can contribute to conflict prevention, resolution and peace building in other parts of the world. The peace building and conflict resolution centre is an important step in opening the door for significant job creation and private sector investment at the Maze Long Kesh site and we have worked out that that could be something in the region of 5,000 new jobs and a £300 million investment. It is projected that the centre itself could support 70 additional jobs and generate approximately £1 million per annum. If you look at the way in which we have been approached by people in conflict situations all over the world – I mean even in the last three months some of our key negotiators who were involved in the Good Friday Agreement negotiations, at the invitation of the Government of Columbia and the FARC guerrillas have been in Havana in Cuba, supporting the ongoing peace negotiations that have been taking place there. My colleague, Gerry Kelly, has been to the Philippines and involved in those discussions also and even in the last six weeks I met a fifteen strong ministerial led delegation from Burma and then three weeks later the warring factions in Burma who were opposed to the Government also came to Belfast to meet with me for discussion on how to take their peace process forward. Of course we have been involved in many other situations throughout the world, so there is an absolute need for this peace building and conflict resolutions centre and of course we were assisted in our peace process. I believe then that we have a duty and responsibility when we are asked to help to give whatever expertise and knowledge we have. Not that we have any delusion of grandeur that we can solve the problems of the world but certainly outlining for conflict situations how we went about bringing an end to conflict in this country. So, I think we all have worked hard over the years to create a stable political process that will enable us to build a shared future for our people. Yes, it is hard work and yes, there are people who are opposed to change and opposed to equality but we are working for a future that recognises and respect the differences that exist between us. I think diversity should be celebrated. I don't get annoyed when I see a Union flag, and I wonder why people think it is a good idea to burn the Tri-colour. We need to leave all that nonsense behind us. We need to recognise that diversity really should be celebrated and should not be a reason for conflict, confrontation or violence. I think we have come too far to lose momentum and the progress that we have made. So we are absolutely all committed to the rule of law and I think the Gardai and the PSNI in terms of combatting those who try to bring us back to the past have done a fantastic job over the course of recent times without the loss of life, which I think is incredible and certainly would not have happened twenty years ago.

So, I am certainly one of those people who within the administration who values the relationship that I have with the trade union movement. I think you are all fantastic people. There are things that certainly we may have disagreements about but Peter Robinson and I disagree about things within Sinn Féin. We have people that disagree with us on different matters – that is all alright. The way they work all of those issues out is through debate and discussion and whenever the trade union leaders come to Stormont Castle to meet with us, I for

one am overjoyed to see them and always welcome them very warmly on every occasion. So, I wish you all a very successful conference and I hope you enjoy your stay in Belfast. Go raibh míle, míle maith agaibh.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

I think just before we part with this Martin, I know you weren't in at the earlier part of our deliberations this morning but Patricia came to the rostrum, Patricia McKeown who I know you know very well, and reminded the conference on the section of the report that we are dealing with, that it was indeed this movement, particularly the comrades in the Northern Ireland Committee, who funded the all-party delegation that went out to Columbia including one of your own colleagues and it is this movement working through Justice for Columbia who set that agenda and I know that you are mindful and aware of that. This is just to ensure that this is emphasised. Could I also just say that you were talking about the great events that are happening in Derry, I understand that one of our past presidents today is going to be honoured in Derry. Inez McCormack is being posthumously awarded with an honorary doctorate, we thank you for that as well.

On behalf of Congress, another one of Jimmy Kelly's statuettes – guard it with your life because they are few and far between. Thanks very much Martin.

Ok, can I just remind you and don't all rush up at once, that the polling booth is now open in Room 1 on the first floor.

We are now going to move on to the EC motion on Northern Ireland. It is going to be moved by Brian Campfield and seconded by Avril Hall-Callaghan. Speakers to this motion please come to the front.

Brian Campfield, NIPSA and Congress Vice-President

President, comrades, Brian Campfield to move Motion No. 11 on behalf of the Executive Council. And, the motion is as you know on Northern Ireland. I think that a feature of our society both North and South is really the absence of democracy in the sense that major decisions are taken really in the interests of people who don't have the needs and the well-being of our own people in mind rather it is the interests of trans-nationals companies, shareholders and those local national and global corporate interests. Northern Ireland is no different except that we have had a peace process which has admittedly, thankfully, saved hundreds if not thousands of lives and what we have is a delicate peace.

The much heralded peace dividend has not materialised, certainly not for the mass of citizens here, particularly when we are now faced with the UK austerity, Government coalition austerity agenda. Now, the political arrangements we have in place may well have been necessary fifteen years ago to consolidate the peace but in essence they have left us also with the legacy of institutional sectarianism. The two main parties in Stormont commit to a form of equality of treatment, a form of parity of esteem, which entails an equal distribution of the resources of each of their communities. It is a form of communitarism and really while it might calm and sort of dampen sectarian conflict and tensions, it is not capable of challenging those divisions and sectarianism. It is not capable of overcoming sectarianism and that is the challenge that we have to see if we can explore an alternative political dispensation which really moves beyond this think is embedded, pessimistic and divisive political situation that we have at the moment.

Throughout the troubles in the 70s and 80s we escaped many of the worst attributes of Thatcherism so we did. Whether it was public spending cuts or privatisation of public utilities – don't get me wrong – we did have that but not to the same extent that they have it in Britain.

We still have a public owned water service, a publicly owned transport system, we still have publically owned municipal waste disposal and leisure services. But now that the peace is moving forward and we have our own Assembly, these are under threat. The privatisation is starting to visit us here in the North with a vengeance. When we hear the politicians and others going on about Northern Ireland PLC, they talk about Northern Ireland being open for business and we hear the argument about the need for a reduced corporation tax. And, people arguing, politicians and economists, that Northern Ireland should be turned into a special enterprise zone. We know about corporation tax because it doesn't matter what you reduce it to, they will only be paying 1 or 2 per cent anyway, so it doesn't matter if you reduced it from 22 to 12.5 percent, the corporations are still going to avoid paying tax.

We can't build and the Deputy First Minister made reference to a shared future, we can't build a shared future in what is effectively an economic straight jacket. And I think that is the message which this conference and the trade union movement has to send not only to the politicians in Stormont but also the Westminster Government. We have an opportunity here to build a radical alternative based on our opposition to cuts in austerity, based on the opposition to privatisation and that could well be the focus for an alternative to this obsession that people have here with flags and with emblems. Just on the point, I mean Martin McGuinness said that it didn't annoy him to see a union flag, many of us have our own prejudices but let me say this – I am very much in favour of things British when you are talking about the National Health Service, when you are talking about the miners, the National Union of Mineworkers who's heroic and historic strike took place thirty years ago next year. You can look at a whole range of British institutions and events and interests which we would be proud to identify with in the same way that we would be able to that in terms of Irishness and we could also say that elements of Irish culture for instance like the Magdalen Laundries and clerical abuse are elements of Irishness which we are completely opposed to, in a way that we should be opposed to war and foreign adventures which are carried out by the British Army as well on behalf of the British Government.

So, things aren't black and white and the trade union movement, I think, is uniquely placed in Northern Ireland to be able to send a completely different message to the vast bulk of citizens. But we need to get down to basics and get down in the workplaces and in communities to build this. It is not much of an accolade to get patted on the back or on the head by a British Prime Minister or a UK President who is effectively a war monger. What we need here just to finalise, you know Martin McGuinness says we need strong and active trade unions, but what I say to Martin McGuinness and what I say to the Stormont Assembly is repeal the anti-trade union legislation, you have it in your power to do it.

Avril Hall-Callaghan, UTU

Before I begin, I would just like to congratulate Eugene on an excellent two years in office as President. President, delegates, in seconding this very important motion I would like to support all that Brian has said about the political situation here. But I would just like to highlight three important messages that I believe need to go out from this conference today. Firstly, to the politicians in Northern Ireland – you need to listen to the voice of the people. The ordinary citizens of Northern Ireland no longer want the tribal politics of the past not the politics of austerity. They are learning that they can hold you accountable and they expect you to protect the interests of the working people. We know that the Westminster Government holds the purse strings in some areas but we expect you on our behalf to challenge their policies, to think creatively, to listen to the voice of the trade union movement when we come to you with suggestions on how we can work together to improve things for the people that you and we represent. The message that we need to go out from this room is that the people of Northern Ireland expect and deserve a better deal. You, the politicians in Northern Ireland, live in your local communities unlike your counterparts in the Cabinet who live in their

ivory towers. You see the impact that austerity measures are having on families who have lost their jobs, their homes and their hope. You use the health service, a service that the Tory Government has brought to its knees. You send your children to the schools, schools that have been stripped of resources due to the cuts in the education budget. I, like Eugene, am extremely disappointed that the First Minister has chosen to decline yet again, this invitation to address this gathering. I have no doubt that he would not snub a conference of this size if we had employers in the room instead of workers. But I would just like to remind Mr Robinson that you ignore us at your peril. A quarter of a million of trade union members in Northern Ireland are all voters and they have families and friends who are voters too. You of all people should appreciate the power of the electorate after the last Westminster election where you lost your seat.

The second message that we need to send out is to the young people and Martin McGuinness has already referred to them. I would like to congratulate the Youth Committee for the superb work they did in organising the G8 celebration and protest. We as a trade union movement need to put more resources into encouraging young people to become active. As the motion says, young people can so easily be drawn down the wrong pathway. Many of them can see no future for themselves due to the current economic climate. Even those with high-level qualification have no guarantee of a job and too many of them are now leaving home to seek work elsewhere, which even further reduces the chances of the Northern Ireland economy recovering. The Education Trade Union Group of the Northern Ireland Committee is currently looking at ways we can re-invigorate the trade union movement by replicating the excellent work that Sally Anne Kinahan has steered in the South through the Youth Connect project. The Women's Committee has already piloted some work and we hope that this will form the basis to move forward.

The third and final message to you and the colleagues you represent, you have the power in the way we move forward. By passing this motion today you will be signing up to a renewed effort to influence the decision makers in our society to reflect what people want. I urge you to support this motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Avril. Speakers to the motion?

Ruairi Creaney, UNISON

Colleagues, Ruairi Creaney, UNISON and ICTU Youth. Before I begin, I would just like to on behalf of the ICTU Youth, Northern Ireland Committee to congratulate John on his election as President and we look forward to working with him and hopefully very closely in the next two year, so congratulation John.

Comrades, as Avril said, the G8 came to Fermanagh. Along with the ICTU Youth Committee and the Belfast Trades Council, I was part of the organising committee to organise a demonstration and organise a festival of ideas, so we had music, comedy and plenty of political discussion over four or five days in and around Belfast. The aim of it was to encourage people who have never been to a trade union event before to come along and hear what we are about. I think it was pretty successful because we stood just around the corner up in Fermanagh along with thousands of other people to oppose war criminals and to oppose capitalist extremists and to oppose their hatred of ordinary people and to oppose their violence and terrorism and I think that came off very well. So in Fermanagh they used the opportunity here to discuss their violent economic ideology, which is commonly known as austerity. My friend Pdraig Mackell, Chair of Congress Youth, recently coined the term 'economic fascism' because that describes more accurately what is going on and the class war that is being waged against us. In the run up to the demonstration there was a concerted

propaganda campaign run by all the media outlets and some of the security forces so we were constantly barraged with propaganda by how there was going to be violence and the only news surrounding this was about the security operation. So, when we were interviewed by journalists from some of the local newspapers, the only questions they would ask is where do you think the violence is going to come from and what are you going to do to stop any violence happening next Saturday. They didn't ask us why we opposed the G8. It was never mentioned by the Irish News or the Belfast Telegraph why anybody feels the need to protest against the G8 and more importantly they didn't even ask us what we stood for. And if there is one thing to be taken out of this whole circus of greed and this orgy of violence, there is one thing to be taken out of this comrades and it is very clear that we need our own media. We need our own daily newspaper run by the trade union movement because if we don't do this, we leave the political agenda to be set by the Irish Times, the Indo and the Belfast Telegraph and all these right-wing papers. And, comrades, if we don't do it – who will do it – that is what I ask you. And this isn't beyond the realms of possibility – this possibility can be done. We are the largest civic society organisation in this country and we don't have a say in any of our media outlets and that needs to be changed and we are the only people who can change that. So we have to take part in this battle of ideas and start fighting back because at the minute we are losing. Thanks very much comrades, I support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any other speakers? Ok, can we move now to Motion 12, standing in the name of NIPSA – mover?

Patrick Mulholland, NIPSA

Patrick Mulholland speaking on behalf of NIPSA moving Motion 12. President, comrades, delegates, many of the points I would have made have already been covered in previous speeches dealing with the issues but I think it is important that we do deal with these issues and conferences such as this. I think the reality of Northern Ireland today is not the reality that was outlined by Martin McGuinness and his speech writers. It was the reality that was outlined by Peter Bunting and that is that the issue of sectarianism and conflict has risen again to the top of agenda for trade unions in Northern Ireland and it is rising on a tide of poverty, rising on a tide of austerity and rising on a tide of political failure at an institutional level. The reality for our members and the reality for people who live in this country is that if you go out around Belfast this evening, and go to the conflict areas, you will see armoured land rovers sitting on the peace lines because we are in the marching season and we are in the rioting season. Sectarianism has not gone away. Sectarianism has been strengthened over the last period of time and we as a movement need to recognise that reality and we need to deal with it.

Over the last period we have seen the flags issue rise. We have seen the parades becoming a focal point. We have seen attacks on orange halls. We have seen riots and we have seen demarcation of territory and underneath all of that we have seen a seething anger in society because all that sectarianism is fed by other things. It is fed first of all by failure of the peace process and we have to have the courage to say this. This peace process is running out of steam. This peace process is losing support. What the peace process has actually done is create an institutional agreement at the top of society that society will be divided up on a sectarianism basis. But, it hasn't created any such agreement at the bottom and in reality the conflict continues there.

The other feeding factors for sectarianism are things like poverty and the reality in working class districts, despite what Martin might say about investment in health and investment in education and the general socialist paradise he paints, the reality is in working class areas there dire, awful, woeful poverty and that poverty is increasing day by day as welfare is cut back, as jobs are cut back, as services are cut back, it is becoming worse and worse. And, by

the way, for the minister to raise about the Ulster Bank cutting hundreds of jobs, I wish to hell he would raise about the Northern Ireland Assembly cutting hundreds of jobs. It would serve him better to do something about the things he can deal with because he could have taken a decision that would have meant there weren't job cuts in education and in health in the civil service. He could have taken a decision that would stop the Northern Ireland Assembly going down the road of privatisation of housing but instead of that he stands here and condemns the Ulster Bank.

Comrades, we face significant problems going forward. We face these issues of sectarianism but we should have confidence I believe in going forward because we are a movement of a unified working class. We are a movement with a proud tradition of standing together. We are a movement who represent tens of thousands from both sides of the sectarian divide and we are a movement that does have the strength to offer real resistance to this road to sectarianism but to do so we have to have a rounded-out approach to these issue and other speakers have dealt with this. I think first of all we have to say absolutely, unequivocally as a movement and leave no doubt about it, not a single doubt. We want to see an end to every single paramilitary campaign in this country. There should not be one more bomb, there should not be one more shooting, and there should not be one more riot because those things are achieving nothing apart from pushing our society backwards. And we should be equally unequivocal on the issue of State repression. We do not want to see one more show trial in this country. We do not want to see any more selective interment, not do we want to see plastic bullets used, and we sure as hell do not want to see a return to mass armed policing such as we saw the G8 visit – by the way partly paid for the Assembly as well. That disgraceful exhibition of State repression should never happen in this country again. And, finally comrades, we have to oppose sectarianism in all its forms and what that means is not just opposing one side's sectarianism, we oppose sectarianism whether its Catholic sectarianism or Protestant sectarianism. Our movement offers a unified alternative to sectarianism, a unified alternative to sectarian politicians and politics. Our movement has the strength and the history. We go forward in confidence but we know we may have to fight again, we may have to take to the streets again, we may have to strike again to defend workers in this country and fight back against sectarianism. If that needs to happen, let's do it.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Paddy. Is there a seconder for the motion? Formally, speakers?

Blaine Kilgallon, UNITE

President, delegates, Blaine Kilgallon, UNITE the Union, attending my first Irish Congress of Trade Union's conference and addressing conference for the first time, endorsing NIPSA's Motion 12 on Northern Ireland Society.

Following on from our national policy conference where our own Youth Committee put forward a similar motion calling on UNITE to engage with our Youth Committee to take a stronger stance and challenge the heightening sectarian tensions in Northern Ireland, which was endorsed by that conference, I feel it only prudent to speak and encourage this conference to carry this motion. I will be brief as my comrade already particularly articulated excellently the key points entailed in the motion. The fact of the matter is comrades is that the majority of the people in Northern Ireland want to live and work in a peaceful and safe society but more importantly, the people of Northern Ireland have the right for a permanent peace and to live and work in such a society. Politicians and right wing media have time and time again turned to tried and tested methods of stirring sectarian tensions to create a smoke screen to steer the attention away from bread and butter issues which affect us every day. The austerity that continue the draconian attacks on our health services and education systems benefits – the fact that Northern Ireland has the worst economy in the United Kingdom, unemployment,

particularly the levels of youth unemployment and the mass emigration of our young people to the four corners of the earth. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the wider trade union labour movement are ideally and uniquely positioned to challenge to support and organise against sectarianism in the way it manifests itself in different shapes and forms. Now is the time to take a stance and through our unions, our movement, our members to take responsibility to stand up and be counted, to make our workplaces, our communities, our society a better place to live and work and to create solid foundations for future generations. It is time to organise, to educate, to get involved and challenge those who cling on to the coattails of the past and encourage and support those who are in positions of influence and authority on the island of Ireland to promise that a permanent and progressive peace in Northern Ireland is fulfilled. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Blaine. Any other speakers to this motion? Ok, can we move on now to Motion 13 standing in the name of Fermanagh Trades Council – Treatment of Older People. Mover.

John Martin, Fermanagh Trades Council

John Martin, Fermanagh Trades Council to move Motion 13. It would be remiss of me if I didn't make a few comments about the G8 circus that was in Enniskillen a lot of weeks ago. Well, we were meeting in the pub in Weatherspoons for this circus of the G8, we decided that thanks be to Christ Putin was there. I don't know how you pronounce this word - Potin or Poteen or whatever, but we were glad to see him there because then we knew that Russia was going to declare war on America.

Now, to come back to the motion – it takes about three seconds – to come back to the motion of treatment of Older People. Adult social care is vital for thousands of older people and a range of services to help older people to remain independent, mobile and to live dignified and fulfilled lives. The many ways in which these services can be accessed and delivered are sometimes confusing for older people. The legal framework in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland for social care is fragmented, complex and open to interpretation. As a result of this abuses of older people both mental and physical have taken place and I would suspect on a daily basis. There is not a day that passes that the media report of incidents of abuses in residential nursing homes and in the homes. This has to stop, it has to stop now not tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, it has to stop now. The purpose of the Dignity Code is to uphold the rights and maintain the personal dignity of older people within the context of securing the health; safety and well-being of those increasingly less able to care for themselves or to properly conduct their affairs. This code recognises that certain practices and actions are unacceptable to older people such as being abusive or disrespectful in any way, treating older people as objects, not respecting the need for privacy, refusing treatment on the grounds of age, intervening without their consent. I could go endlessly, the list is exhaustive and I will end with this – the seconder of this motion will mention what the code stands for. Congress please support.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you John. Is there a seconder for Motion 13? Come on ahead please.

John Dougherty, UNITE

Good morning President and delegates, I support Motion 13. John Dougherty, retired member UNITE. I support this motion because I believe that the Identity Code will help to eradicate what is happening to our most vulnerable people namely senior citizens and their health. These are people who have been lying in a trolley for twenty-eight hours, when not a trolley on a bench. When they get in to the ward they don't have the proper care because the cuts imposed by this Government of ours putting extra workload on the nurses and auxiliary

people that no way can they do proper care for them. They want everybody to stay in their own homes – everybody would want that – but anybody with a chronic illness would have to go into hospital but there is not the back-up care for the people in those homes because the providers of this are in for profit and not for care. They have ill-trained staff, very low wages, very poor conditions and a very poor expectation. What seems to be the thinking of the health people and the ministers and Think Tanks is that we are a liability, that we are a burden on the health scheme, that we don't contribute anything to it. This is a falsehood because we contribute to senior citizens £40 billion to the economy of the country – more than we receive – with our caring for our elderly people, for the voluntary work we do and also for paying our taxes, indirect tax and taxes and also for caring for our grandchildren. Now, we demand that we have the proper rights and conditions because we set up and we fought for the health. It didn't come to us without a fight and therefore we should be treated with some dignity and that is why I am asking Congress here to support us in our fight to have this Code incorporated into the training of all people who work in health namely the senior staff and also be better funded so that we will not see people losing their dignity because once you lose your human dignity what have you got left? So I ask Congress to support this motion. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Speakers to Motion 13?

Marjorie Trimble, UNISON

Marjorie Trimble, President, delegates, there is no greater base of human rights than being evicted from your own home. The political scramble for cover as a result of public outrage over the closure of our NHS residential homes was sickening. Mr Poots passed the blame to the Trusts. The First and Deputy First Ministers backed Poots' privatisation plans and blamed the health department. Health Board Chief Executive, John Compton, passed the buck back to Poots and the LMS points the finger to the Trusts. The decision to withdraw from the NHS residential provision means that someone is making a profit. We are asking who is in charge of this Government? Who is influencing its decisions to privatise health and social care? And, who is making a profit from these decisions? For how much longer can we tolerate Government ministers and senior health officials withholding the truth or telling outright lies. Our starting point must be the rights of older, vulnerable people in our society. Despite confusion and denials by the minister, widely available UK and international evidence exists that the voluntary transfer of older people leads to mental and physical health problems and even premature death. In the USA it is known as 'relocation stress syndrome'. Instead of crying crocodile tears, the minister should stand down and place the guardianship of our National Health Service to those who believe in its guiding principles. Publically owned and delivered free at the point of need. There is clear overwhelming public support to keep residential care homes within the NHS and stop the ministers transforming your care plans for closure and privatisation. On Monday UNISON and the campaign group 'Friends of Care Homes' held a public rally in Stormont to lobby MLA support in opposing the health minister's plan. We were joined by residents, relatives and staff from the homes targeted for closure. We must continue to challenge our politicians and our political parties to state where they stand on the future of the NHS. We are seeking a pledge from MLAs to stand with us in our opposition to NHS residential care home closures and to send a clear message to the minister that he needs to reverse his policy of closing the homes and lift the embargo on recruitment and reopen the beds that have been closed for the last eighteen months. They must be honest about the real impact of the massive budget cuts in health. It is within their power to remove immediately the distress being caused to the NHS resident in our NHS homes, staffed by excellent health care workers. A special meeting of the Executive would be a good starting point and will this happen before the first casualty? Please support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Marjorie.

Billy Caughey, UNISON

President, delegates, Billy Caughey, UNISON supporting Motion 13 on the treatment of older people. I believe that why older people and those on disability are treated is a measure of civilised society. They have contributed throughout their lives and should be treated with dignity and respect. All too often they are not. Recent surveys have revealed that at least half a million older people in the UK and 10,000 older people in Ireland face abuse from their relatives and carers. This abuse can be psychological, financial, physical or even sexual. It is often ignored and our staff often lack the training in identifying it and reporting it. This is compounded by all the people unable or too frightened or too embarrassed to report it. Mostly, it is the humiliation of having a complete lack of rights to make their own choices in their own lives. These are problems that trade union members have been trying to bring to the attention for years. We invest too little in the services for the elderly. A survey of adult social workers also said that they feared the Government's privatisation agenda would lead them to dealing with more cases where they need to take steps to safeguard vulnerable adults. Social workers said that the schemes where older people were recruiting staff with no CRB checks or other safeguards would turn back the clock on recent improvements in systems and procedures for protecting vulnerable adults. Isolated people who have cash from social services with no monitoring or care could become easy prey for unscrupulous people. The drive to care for more elderly people in their homes also leaves them isolated and more vulnerable to abuse. So does the closure of day centres and cuts to meals on wheels and other services. The National Pensioners Convention Dignity Code seeks to uphold the rights and maintain the personal dignity of older people within the context of ensuring their health, safety and well-being. Where ever older people chose to live they should be able to rely on services of a high standard. The workforce provisory services should be better paid, better trained and better resourced. Endless cost-cutting measures will only make this aim harder to meet. Governments, North and South, need to act now to implement the Dignity Code in full and end the scandal. Conference please support.

Geraldine Kelly, UNITE

Conference, Geraldine Kelly, UNITE supporting Motion 13. Conference, old people all over this island North and South are not being treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve. In the past maybe twenty years ago I worked as a care assistant for a short time and I saw at first-hand how some people were being treated in nursing homes. I was told at one stage that I was in the wrong job because I took too much time and effort with the residence that I worked with. As now I haven't worked in that sector in twenty years, I am now also going to speak from experience in the South of Ireland. I have both parents in my family cared for. For four years we did it in the home and now we have had to avail of a care home. My mother has Alzheimer's and she would be in a big group of very vulnerable people who can't speak up for themselves. She is lucky that she has a big family that look out for her but there are thousands of people who don't. We are all going to be old at some stage and we all deserve dignity and respect, so support this motion, thank you.

Cara Mackin, Newry Trades Council

Delegates, Cara Mackin from Newry Trades Council to support the motion. Conference, I note from this motion that our health minister, Edmond Poots endorses the Dignity Code which is to uphold the rights of older people. This is the same individual who introduced 'Transforming Your Care' and made a decision to close residential homes in the North of Ireland. He maintains he only planned to close 50% so he blames the mis-communication on the Trust – on our members – they got it wrong – they are stupid, they got it wrong. There is a very clear directive in 'Transforming Your Care', which for those who don't know I will translate it, it is

also known as destroying your life, taking away your choice and taking away your dignity. This in my mind is total abuse of an older person's rights. One point that I think has been missed in this – if this man were allowed to close the residential homes, a year or two we had a private provider who collapsed in the economic climate. There were a number of private residential homes who fell by the wayside let's say. The people living in these homes were put at extreme risk. Our members in the Health and Social Care Trusts who came to the rescue upheld their homes and made sure that those people were able to continue living in them. Where is the safety net should this man be allowed to close these homes? Our MLAs including the health minister and his henchman John Compton who is the author of 'Transforming Your Care' are removing these people's choice, they are removing their dignity and I think it is time we stood up and said enough is enough. These people have paid their taxes, they have built the society we now live in and I think we should support this motion. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

No further speakers? I move to Motion No. 14, 15th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement standing in the name of UNISON. Mover please.

Patricia McKeown, UNISON

President, delegates, Patricia McKeown, UNISON moving Motion 14. Thank you President before making reference to the fact that as we meet here today, the University of Ulster is conferring an Honorary Doctorate on Inez. However, if she knew that after a four year struggle by the end of this month, the bastards are outsourcing her members to a private company, I have no doubt that she would hand it back. There are two people listed in the Obituaries who have made a very significant contribution to the peace process on behalf of this movement and our people. One is Bobby Gourley and we sadly lost Bobby, former Chair of the Northern Ireland Committee, former USDAW leader here since we last met. Bobby was a tough Loyalist who took a tough and uncompromising risk for peace and I pay tribute to what he did. The other is Inez McCormack and Inez, our leader, our sister, right Bobby died prematurely and that's a trend among working class people in this part of the world that you will hear about more. We thought that setting this down in this motion was a fitting tribute we could pay to someone who was celebrated in March by not one but two Presidents of Ireland who travelled to the city to commemorate the extraordinary contribution that Inez made. The best thing we could do is keep going because our peace process is in trouble. You heard the Deputy First Minister this morning and we know the technicalities of joint office – you can only say certain things – but the Congress was in the room on the issue of peace, equality and human rights when Martin McGuinness said: "I am on the same page as the trade union movement", and Peter Robinson said: "I don't know what page you are talking about, I don't support the Good Friday Agreement, there will be no Bill of Rights, there will be no Single Equality Bill and we don't like all of the anti-discrimination in laws". And, that is the size of the problem we are dealing with. One of the biggest mistakes we have made was to let the politicians take over our peace process instead of retaining it as the people and that is one of the things that this motion is about. What we have to do as a movement is take that process back again. Now, the co-signatures of our peace agreement – two Governments are running away. The British Government has run away. They were to meet the Congress two weeks ago on the missing Bill of Rights. They were to stand in Westminster with us last week explaining why the Bill of Rights was missing. And, the other co-signatory promised it would meet the Congress and you know I heard what the General Secretary said, but if the Tánaiste cannot be here today, where the hell is the Taoiseach? This is an international peace agreement. This is the 15th anniversary and this Belfast. It appears that those who were not in power when this incredible deal was brokered do not take responsibility in the way they should. But this agreement stands in the name of Governments and we do not care who has subsequently been elected when it comes to the responsibility of those Governments for our peace agreement. And this Congress must exert as much as pressure as it possibly can on both the

Irish and the British Government to live up to the mark because the excuse we are being given is that we can't have a Bill of Rights until there is consensus among our political parties. Well you have just heard what Peter Robinson has to say about peace, equality and human rights and the prospect of consensus between him and Martin McGuinness on that issue is as remote today as it ever was, no matter how much of a picture we present for inward investment. And, incidentally we haven't invested anything in a new hospital in the South West, Martin, it's a PFI and by the time the State has finished paying for it you will have handed a property developer a billion pounds for a hospital that cost 300,000.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Patricia. Secunder for the motion? Formerly seconded. Any speakers? No one is prepared to try and follow it I think.

Can we now take votes on the preceding motions please, starting with Motion 11 – those in favour, those against, that's carried.

Motion 12 – carried.

Motion 13 – carried.

Motion 14 – carried.

At this time I am going to call upon our guest, Grahame Smith to address us. Grahame, as you will probably be aware, is the General Secretary of the Scottish TUC. He is a good friend of our Congress. He has attended our Congress over the years and indeed at the Northern Ireland Committee Conference when he can. He has been deeply involved in the development of better understanding the relationship between the various Congresses throughout the islands, that is the Scottish, Welsh, Irish and Northern Ireland Committee and including the British as well, and has been a good friend of ours. Just to say, Grahame, you are very welcome to our conference.

Fraternal Address by Grahame Smith, General Secretary of the STUC

Eugene, thank you very much indeed. President, delegates, it gives me tremendous pleasure to bring you the warmest greetings from the General Council and staff of the Scottish TUC. Of the relationships we have with trade union centres across the world, I think the relationship we have with you is the one that we hold most dear. That relationship goes beyond attending our respective Congresses and our participation in the Council of the Isles, together with our friends in the TUC and Wales TUC. We also have a shared history and many of those whose ancestors came from Ireland and settled in Scotland have been stalwarts of the Scottish trade union movement over the years and many of the figures in your movement over the years have strong Scottish connections. Because of that strong sense of our shared history, we took the opportunity at our Congress in April this year to commemorate the Lock-Out, to commemorate a struggle of Irish working men and women and for the right to organise and bargain collectively through trade unions. That struggle of course is as relevant today as it was then and we took the opportunity also to acknowledge the part played by the Scottish TUC then and Scottish union branches in providing support to the strikers. The role played by the TUC has quite rightly been highlighted but the archives of the STUC record donations from the length and breadth of Scotland from unions, long gone I suppose, whose identity reflected the times from the Saddlers' Union, from the Floor Cloth and Linoleum Union, to the Brass Moulders' Union and President, from a forerunner of your union – the Scottish Horse and Motormen's Association. The STUC Annual Report from the time contains the text of a telegram from the Dublin Trades Council and it states: "The Dublin Trades Council sends fraternal greetings and grateful thanks to Scottish workers for generous support during labour

troubles here". 'Labour troubles here' slightly understated the situation perhaps. Preserving and reflecting on our history is important. George Orwell said that who controls the past controls the future and who controls the present controls the past. We have a responsibility to preserve and indeed to promote our own history. If we don't take on that responsibility we will leave our history, our trade union working class history, to others who will present it and the values that shaped it for their purposes and not ours. And reflection on the past is no bad thing but if it helps us to determine how we make progress and how we move forward, and in confronting the challenges workers face in Scotland today – and indeed across the UK – we need look no further back than the Tory led Governments of the 80s and 90s. And, once again we are forced to confront and overcome the policies of the current wave of right-wing ideologues and defunct the myth that weak unions, minimum employment rights, privatisation, deregulation are the prerequisites of a successful economy. And the evidence is all in our favour. Austerity has failed even in terms of its staunchest advocates. In 2010 when the coalition Government began its austerity programme, we were told by the Government that our economy would grow by 6.5% by the end of 2012 – actual growth 1.1%. We were told that by 2014/15 the deficit would be £37 b – we are now told that it will in fact be £108 b. We were told that real wages would grow by 0.5% in 2013 – we are now told that real wage growth will be 0.1%. In fact real wages have now declined for four years in a row and the last time that happened was the 1920s. The politicians have made much of some recent positive signs in employment but what lies underneath the figures is what really matters. We have a labour market in Scotland characterised by a long-term persisted youth unemployment, declining real wages, increasing under-employment and the vulnerability and increasing insecurity of part-time temporary work, forced self-employment and increasing use of zero hours contracts. And we have an economy characterised by under-investment and growing inequality. There is meaningful reform of the banks, just more job losses for ordinary workers as announced today for Ulster Bank, but alongside those bonuses for bank bosses, so with no reform of the banks or a re-balancing of manufacturing we have this sort of instability that suggests that another crisis may not be too far round the corner. Now, Congress, I don't have the time to say everything that I would like to say about the Coalition Government, but the one thing that really angers me is its vilification of the poor. We used to have a welfare system based on the principle of social insurance where citizens contributed collectively when they could so that they could be protected when they couldn't. Welfare was a progressive concept. They have turned it into a dirty word. It is no longer a right or an entitlement earned through making national insurance contributions, it is now something that is conditional, something that you have to justify, has to be seen to be deserved and for which they should be grateful and for which they can look forward to being vilified as a parasite and a scrounger.

Last week we participated in the TUC's Austerity Uncovered initiative. We visited communities across Scotland to hear from those most affected by austerity. We visited food banks and the fact that we have food banks in the 21st century is a scandal in itself. We visited community facilities faced with closure. We talked to people living in fear of losing their homes as a result of the 'bedroom tax'. We are not so naive to believe that by highlighting the desperate plight of people that we could shame this Coalition Government into ditching austerity. Any Government that could introduce the 'bedroom tax', can cut benefits for the sick and disabled while cutting corporation tax and the income tax of the wealthiest, has no shame. However, this has helped to deepen the relationship between unions and local communities and take on board their concerns and also to promote our alternative vision. I believe that we have won the argument against austerity. What we have yet to do is convince enough people that there is a genuine, credible alternative which is why we need to continue to organise in our workplaces and in our communities and that is what we will be doing in the period ahead.

President, I want to conclude by mentioning something that has arisen out of the current debate about Scotland's constitutional future as we move towards the referendum on Scottish independence next September. One thing that is clear to me and I think also increasingly clear to affiliates is, that whatever the outcome of the referendum next year, Scotland and that means the United Kingdom will be a different place and the structures of our trade union movement will have to reflect that. We need a proper and mature debate about the relationship between unions and the trade union centres in all jurisdictions of the UK, a debate which arguably should have taken place well before now. As a result of devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – and I suppose also as a result of the Good Friday Agreement – the system of Government across the islands is vastly different to what it was in the 1990s. However, this is not reflected in arrangements in our trade union centres. The trade union Council of the Isles is a very useful forum for building relationships, exchanging views, and for mutual learning. But, perhaps we need to ask if we have used as effectively as we might have in advancing our common objectives, in maximising our collective strength to influence political and public opinion in advancing the interests of workers and in securing rights and press support for our alternative to austerity. And there are other models perhaps in the Nordic Council of Trade Unions that we might look learn from so perhaps this is something worth exploring in advance of the next Council of the Isles meeting.

President, there have been many attempts by bosses and their political lackeys to crush trade unionism, the Lock-Out being amongst the most significant. Congress we are still here and we are still fighting because of our enduring values of solidarity and collectivism. It has as ever been a great pleasure to be with you. Thank you for the opportunity to address you and best wishes for the remainder of your Congress and I look forward to our continuing work together in the period ahead. Thank you very much indeed.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Grahame. I am pleased to say Grahame that the paint has dried on this one for you. I was told I think by Alec Kitsen, the late Alec Kitsen, that the Motorman's Union in Scotland – the predecessor union of National Union of Vehicle Builders, that a well-known member – he was a fellow called Sean Connery and I remember when he said that – he is about £472 in arrears, could someone go around and collect it – could you accept this on our behalf Grahame.

Can we now call on Jack McGinley, the Chair of Standing Orders Committee to make an announcement please.

Jack McGinley, Chair of Standing Orders

Colleagues, the UNITE trade union have sought permission to withdraw the amendment to the next motion. I move.

John Douglas, Vice-President of Congress

Can we have the movers of Motion 15 please.

Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council

President, delegates, comrades, Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council to move Motion 15. This is an important motion comrades because sectarianism quite literally kills. Conference, the issue of sectarianism tensions and how we deal with the recent flag dispute in the North is an extremely sensitive one. Belfast Trades Council debated the issue on three separate occasions eventually agreeing the text of a letter to issue to the media. Even with careful crafting of our position which recognised the right to protest but balanced that with objections to threats and intimidation that had occurred, only the Newsletter published the letter. There is no doubt that tensions were stirred by certain political parties hoping for political gain rather than focus on

the needs of those working class communities. When the Unionist forum was set up in January to discuss issues of concern within that community, the main Unionist parties insisted that academic selection for post-primary education was not to be discussed. Despite the evidence produced recently of significant education underachievement in working class Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist areas, there was a tangible demonstration of wanting to keep that community in its place. As you know, sectarianism however did not start with these politicians today. They are, however, the custodians of a segregated society with 85% of the population of the North living in separate housing developments, and with the education system, segregated from the main. On top of this the good work undertaken by the Housing Executive for over 40 years is now also under threat. It is a sad indictment not just of the political system and political parties but actually of other sides as well. Fifteen years after the Belfast Agreement will now have more peace walls than during the conflict.

In 1969 when many parts of Belfast were in flames, a small group of five Gaeligores – that is Irish language activists – including my father decided to rebuild Bunbeg Street. They faced huge opposition from the State and from the Belfast Corporation. They faced resistance and suspicion from the fledgling SDLP and they faced other difficulties from the local Republican movement. They faced those difficulties down strong and together. They designed the houses, they paid the finances themselves through fundraising, they built and they allocated the houses to families who had lost their homes, whilst also establishing the first Tenants Association. However, where they failed was in convincing some of the Falls and some of the Shankill, but more importantly the British Army and the security forces at that time not to construct what was to become the first permanent barbed wire between the two communities. They argued at that time that once a barrier was in place it could take generations before the community agreed to take it down again – how right they were.

Sectarianism exists in this society for many complex, historical, political, religious and economic reasons. However, one significant reason why it continues to have such a stranglehold is that the Stormont Government and now the Assembly political parties have had and continue to have a vested interest in maintaining those divisions for voting reasons and maintenance of political power. As the largest civic society organisation in this island, we are the only organisation capable of uniting the working class around issues which affect our daily lives. This can be done while still respecting individual views under national identity or allegiance. When politicians try to convince their voters that a flag, whatever that flag is, is all they have left to identify themselves you can be sure that this is only to hide the real agenda of attacking workers' conditions, their pensions, their welfare entitlements or their health requirements.

Trademark have been working with ICTU for the last number of years as a partner to work with unions North and South, employers and also private companies as ordinary members, to bring together their many years of experience to bring down the sectarian barriers which exist both physically and in the mind. Trademark have worked in recent times with NIPSA, MANDATE, UNITE and Congress in the North, challenging sectarianism in the workplace. But, as you know comrades, sectarianism doesn't stop at the border. Prejudice doesn't just exist in the 'Black North'. In addition with the increase in migrant labour across Ireland with our brothers and sisters coming here from other countries, we have learnt that we Irish can also be every bit as racist as those we used to condemn. We cannot ignore this any longer. We have a responsibility to challenge and to confront sectarianism and racism, to tear down the barriers in people's minds so that eventually we can encourage our working class brothers and sisters to take the courageous step of finally taking down those physical barriers. Please support the motion.

John Douglas, Vice President of Congress

Seconder to the motion?

Dooley Harte, Craigavon Trades Council

Conference, Dooley Harte, Craigavon Trades Council to second the motion. While there is quite clearly been progress within Northern Ireland, I think we can't avoid the obvious as Paddy has pointed out. The North of Ireland and the South of Ireland is still rife with sectarianism and with racism. Our movement has been at the forefront for a long time of tackling these issues and we need to continue with that. But there is a question – are we actually doing enough as a movement? Are we doing enough as individual trade unions and Trades Councils to try and achieve our objectives on these issues? Our Trades Council covers an area that is rife with political and community division but it is also, and in relation to the aspects around sectarianism for a long time, but there is also a significant increase on issues around racism given the high percentage of foreign nationals who live in the Craigavon area. We have been working with a number of groups within the area to try and fight some of these attitudes. We have organised a number of public events and seminars around that. One of the things we wanted to do was to ensure that our Trades Council members got some education, some knowledge, some skills in order to try and do that. We attended courses to try and provide them so that we could deal with the issues in a pro-active way. That training was provided by Congress's affiliates and Trademark. What we found was that Trademark bring not just the issues around religion or difference in race but also both in an economic and trade union ethos to that, which is critically important. And the economic is important. We have heard a number of people raise issues and Paddy raised a number of issues there around the issues of economy. I listened to the Belfast Mayor yesterday, Martin O 'Millionaire as he is known locally, speak about Belfast City Council's commitment not to privatise services and listening to Martin McGuinness talking there about the work of the Assembly in protecting jobs. I would have liked them to have a few words with our colleagues in Magherafelt in order to ensure that leisure services there weren't privatised and I think it is a bit rich for him to stand up here and preach to us. So, therefore, what we want is support for unions to take the expertise within Trademark and to use that. Joe Law of Trademark has stated that during his very long experience challenging racism and sectarianism that he has met many people that are happy to state that they know a lot of individuals who are racist or who are sectarianism but that they are not. I think we have to face up and accept that we all have baggage that our activists and our members have baggage with them and that we have to deal with that and confront that up front. So, what I ask you is to support the motion, support Trademark and lets work together to move our communities and our movement forward. Thank you.

John Douglas, Vice President of Congress

Any speakers to Motion 15? Name and organisation please.

Aileen Morrissey, MANDATE

Good afternoon Conference, Aileen Morrissey, from MANDATE. President, delegates and friends, MANDATE as a trade union and as an affiliate of Congress, has availed of the training available through Trademark. This training has allowed our officials, our representatives and our activists actively engage in the understanding of what is happening in society, in politics and also in the economic climate. I am not here to suggest that Trademark have all the answers to what our woes are in relation to the financial crisis, but they certainly have widened the thinking of our membership and our activists and have them in a position now where they can actually ask questions and will ask questions of our political leaders and will actually question us as to why decisions when made at certain bodies impact on them and their families and lead them into the hardship they encounter. This training has broadened all of the views and aspects of what our roles are as trade unionists and the equality training as

offered by Trademark has enabled our shop stewards and reps to be inclusive of the varied diverse cultures in our workplaces and this is what I feel trade unions should do. They should engage with people, have people come on board and all act as one unit to move our agenda and our objectives forward for the best place for our workers which are all inclusive.

At this point I would call on Conference here to support this motion and I would say to other trade unions, please actively engage in the training programmes that are available to Trademark, thank you.

John Douglas, Vice President of Congress

Any further speakers? No further speakers so I will put Motion 15 to the floor – all in favour of Motion 15, carried.

I will also put the adoption of the Executive Council Report, Section 3, Building the Peace, to the floor. All in favour, carried.

Moving on, we are moving on to the Equality Discrimination, I would like to call on Marie Mulcahy of the Congress Women's Committee to address conference. Is Marie here?

Máire Mulcahy, Congress Women's Committee

President, delegates, Máire Mulcahy, Chair of Congress Women's Committee and I am speaking to the report of Women's Committee – both the Republic and Northern Ireland which is on pages 84 and 104.

These reports touch on what is essential for equality in the workplace, what is needed to advance the interests of women workers, women within trade unions and women in society, the efforts undertaken on same and the challenges remaining. In relation to equality in the workplace, equal pay remains the over-riding goal. How to get this in the absence of collective bargaining rights, with wage setting mechanisms under threat and a weakened equality infrastructure poses a huge challenge, but tackle it we must. At all seminars and conferences organised by the Women's Committees North and South, we have used the opportunity to highlight the continuing wage gap that exists - 17% on average across the EU. The presentation by Dr Micheál Collins, NERI to the March 2013 seminar indicated that the wage gap rises by 4%, an additional 4% for women with children. Affordable, well-regulated childcare, flexible working arrangements and shared parenting opportunities must be pursued. Dr Collins again in his presentation to the same seminar in March revealed that the low paying sector is characterised by low union density are populated predominantly by women, one factor which contributes to the wage gap, and yet instances of union organisation and effort show that trade union membership is a premium for women.

Congress is involved in developing an equality module to be included in a trade union studies award and which will assist trade union reps in the workplace in making the case for equal pay and equal treatment.

The Women's Committee also pushed for the transposition of the parental leave directive which provides for shared responsibility for childcare and this was transposed in March, 2013 and it extends the leave from three to four months, the extra month being non-transferable between parents. The Women's Committee met the relevant officials from Justice, Equality and Law Reform and pointed out that the Act, though welcome, has generated arrangements which are often too ridged, units of time not sufficiently flexible and in some cases so long as to be too costly for employees to take this leave. Any relaxation or flexibility not unsurprisingly has to be negotiated locally with the employers. Respect for equality in the workplace needs a body which can recognise and vindicate an employee's right to make a complaint. The

Women's Committee representatives met representatives from Justice, Equality & Law Reform to make the case for an enforcement authority which would continue to vindicate the rights of workers in encountering discrimination. We opposed the imposition of a fee on those seeking to make a complaint, seeing it as a possible deterrent. We emphasised the need for the employee to have the opportunity to make his or her case and we argued for a properly resourced workplace relations service.

Moving on to representation of women within the trade union movement. Well we know that women represent over 50% of trade union members. We don't have exact up to date data on female occupancy within leadership and decision making roles. Notwithstanding that we do know of the huge and unacceptable gap between the number of women and men in key positions within the trade unions. Influence is welcome but insufficient. An audit has been circulated to affiliates, North and South, asking them to provide data on the number of males and females in various tiers of decision making. The audit also asks unions to indicate what steps they are taking via policy collective agreements, claims to promote equality for both their own staff and members across a number of grounds. It is imperative that we have a good return as you cannot measure progress or lack of it without data and whether our measures to date have been effective or have they fallen short. We will share analysis of the data with the affiliates.

Northern Ireland Women's Committee are continuing with the 'Petal, Women in Leadership' course and they have undertaken a number of initiatives themselves. They have drawn up an Action Plan on a number of issues under the headings of 'Women in Society', 'Women in Unions', and 'Women in the Workplace' and they have identified the following priorities. The priorities are developing a gender sensitive response to the crisis, a strategy for women's employment, austerity and its detrimental impact on women's health – a trade union response. They are also developing policies in relation to caring roles in women and flexible working patterns. In April, 2011 as part of the Women's Committee in Northern Ireland, part of the Women's ad hoc policy group, helped organise the launch of the Women's Manifesto, Northern Ireland Assembly, and the Local Elections 2011. Both Northern Ireland and the Republic fed in to the submissions in to the Trade Union Commission which allowed for presentations on how to ensure that equality is owned and pursued by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and I believe this was dealt with yesterday, but can I repeat the key recommendations were: mainstream equality, equality proof our own policies and procedures, embed obligations to promote equality and combat discrimination in ICTU Rules and Constitutions, respect and maintain and, if necessary, reform those committees working for equality. There must be opportunities and structures within our unions and a voice for groups experiencing inequality and discrimination at work.

In relation to working on the interests of women within society, we have worked with a number of kindred organisations. In Northern Ireland the Women's Committee is working with the Equality Coalition on the Welfare Reform Bill and they have also contributed to the Hate Crime Conference in November, 2012. In the Republic the Women's Committee is continuing to input into the 'Turn Off the Red Light' campaign which had a successful result last week when the Oireachtas Committee recommended criminalisation of those who purchase sex. The Republic of Ireland engaged with the survivors of the Magdalen Laundries and lent our support by way of petitions to Minister Shatter to their request for justice and reparation in recognition of their enforced enslavement in our very own gulags. Their fight was honoured at our March, 2013 and they are moving towards their own solutions. The Executive Committee and Northern Ireland Women's Committee asked for the investigation to be widened to include survivors of the Bethany Homes.

The Republic of Ireland worked with the 'Action X' campaign to press for the immediate legislation on the X-case which, as you know, is overdue by twenty-one years. The committee welcomed the arrival of the protection of life during pregnancy bill giving protection to pregnant women facing life threatening illnesses and welcome its passage through the Dáil but view the penalties which can be up to fourteen years imprisonment for those who stray beyond their bounds as draconian and view the requirement for a tribunal committee of three, a device without parallel according to the master of one of the Dublin maternity hospitals, without parallel in any other medical or obstetric situation, to be deeply insulting to women.

North and South committees have worked with agencies charged with the eradication of domestic violence and ICTU has recently made a presentation through the Oireachtas Committee of Justice, Defence and Equality on that issue. We are working with the National Women's Council on the issue of taxation of maternity grants. ICTU is campaigning for the ratification of the ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers and we will work to ensure that the Minister Bruton lives up to his recent promise that Ireland will be one of the early ratifiers.

Finishing up, I suppose, at our 2012 Conference paid tribute to Northern Ireland's finest – Inez McCormack, Betty Sinclair and Mary Galway. Both committees were saddened by the death of Inez McCormack and Patricia McKeown paid a fine and fitting tribute to her at the March 2013 seminar. The strongest memory I have of Inez McCormack is her standing up years and years ago and instilling a sense of pride in women workers who worked in very hierarchical workplaces and also instilling a sense of pride in belonging to the trade union movement.

It remains for me to thank all the affiliates who bring their experience and views to the table, to thank the Officers for their huge contribution – Theresa Devaney, Vivien Holding and Theresa Graham, Margaret Browne, Ann-Louise Gilligan (who is recovering from an illness and we send her our best wishes). Can I conclude by plundering a bit of Esther Lynch's address to us on the overwhelming need for collective bargaining and the essential requirement to have unambiguous protection for employee representatives to indicate trade union rights and to say that she reminded us that each of us has inherited the fight for trade union rights and I would include for the right of women workers. Thank you very much.

John Douglas, Vice President of Congress

Thank you Máire for an excellent report. Calling any speakers to Section 2 or Section 4 of the Congress report.

Pamela Dooley, UNISON

Chairman, delegates, Pamela Dooley, UNISON and member of the Women's Committee. I am getting up here this morning because I suppose that I have a message and I have a message for all the women in the room. Every time I hear the name Inez McCormack, I remind myself why I am here and why I do what I do and I want to remind you all today, the women in the room, why you are here and how you got here. We talked at the very beginning of the conference – I think Eugene spoke about the percentage of women on the island which is now higher than the percentage of men – I still look around this room and I look at the platforms. I am privileged, I am lucky to be in rooms but there are an awful lot of the women here today still haven't got into those rooms and that is about building leadership. It is not just about leadership for the likes of me to be up here standing here, it is about my domestic, my home care workers, it's about the low paid workers, it's about all those people who have still not got a voice. We are feeling far too comfortable. We forget the fight we had to get us here. There is a myth out there and this myth is growing. There is a myth among women that we are ok. We are not ok. We still not where we should be. We should be three quarters of the platform up there. I am saying to you to get your people on the Leadership courses, to fight

for your people who face disadvantage, to ensure that you make the space for them not just the space for yourself, the space for the people coming behind you. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Ok, can we move to Motion 16, standing in the Executive Council on Equality. The mover is Patricia McKeown.

Patricia McKeown, UNISON

Chair, delegates, Patricia McKeown moving this motion on behalf of the Executive Council and honoured to do so after that contribution and from Pamela. One point of this motion is that it ain't over folks. We might finally have got to proportionality inside the trade union movement with women in the lead in terms of membership but Pamela has already made it clear, oh my God the distance we have to travel and the discrimination that is faced on a daily basis and the humiliation faced on a daily basis by women workers across this island. And, it has been an effort thus. The progress we have made has been hard fought for and it has been wrestled off Governments. Nobody has come along and given us anything, we have always had to fight and we have been fighting not just for decades but for centuries.

The motion is about what we have to do ourselves – put our money where our mouths are – while making demands of Government. And what we have to do for ourselves – quite right we need proper laws on collective bargaining and proper rights on collective bargaining – but we do collectively bargain most of the time. The problem is the issues and the equality and fundamental human rights are not centre stage in that bargaining. And, what we are not doing is taking a broader view if we bargain for something here have we just caused discrimination for another block of our people over there. And we need to start looking at this very, very honestly. Women understand this because women cover so many of the categories as vulnerable to discrimination. They are not like one ninth of our anti-discrimination laws in the North. You know, there are black women, there are gay women and there are women with disabilities, there are young women and older women, they are Catholic, they are Protestants, they are all those categories and multiple deprivation and multiple discrimination has to be challenged and this is the difficulty. We have passed motions at successive conferences, recognising that in the face of global prices, recession, depression, we said as a Congress prejudice, discrimination and racism and homophobia and misogyny will all rise to the surface. We knew that was going what was going to happen because it has happened before, before and before. The problem is that we have passed the motion and we have not done enough about it yet and we need to get ourselves in a fit state to cope with the fact that our membership is facing this kind of discrimination every day of the week. We need to take these Governments to task and come on, does anybody here think that the Irish Government is merging the Equality Agency and the Irish Human Rights Commission because they are committed to equality and human rights? I don't think so. I also think it is a breach of the Good Friday Agreement and so too does the Executive Council. Just last week a law was passed in Westminster and it went through very quietly on the Miscellaneous Provisions Bill relating to our Government here. They have just been handed the right to decide the composition of the Human Rights in the North and Oh, my God, the trade union movement fought to make sure that that wasn't handed to our political parties because we don't trust them as far as we can throw them and it could well be the death of our own human rights body. But, there is a Good Friday Agreement, it applies to both parts of this island. There are anti-discrimination laws. We are the trade union movement. We can take the lead on this and if anybody thinks that women have settled, the answer came very strongly from Máire and Pamela, women have not settled. This is a big fight. We are still here. We are still going to take the lead on this fight and we have got to make a difference. I move on behalf of the Executive Council.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Patricia. Seamus.

Seamus Dooley, NUJ

Colleagues, Seamus Dooley, NUJ seconding Motion 16 on behalf of the Executive Council, drawing attention to number of empty seats which may in itself be an expression of the lack of real commitment on the part of delegates, male and female, to the issue of equality.

Too often Northern Ireland is viewed to the prism of orange and green but coincidently as we meet today we meet in the middle of Pride, so let's first begin by extending fraternal greetings to our LGBT members, because for once we can fly proudly the rainbow flag. MacNeice once said you cannot save your soul with bunting. I am not sure there will be much eternal salvation this week but by God there will be pride. On that spirit of inclusion I want to complement the unions in Northern Ireland, including Patricia's own union and UNITE and also the Teachers' unions, took advertising in this and I would ask you to look at that because I think in a fairly grey landscape this is an opportunity to celebrate as is the announcement of a referendum on same sex marriage in the Republic. But there isn't much good news other than that.

The spirit of inclusion must remain at the heart of all trade union activity and I can't improve on what Patricia has said in how we need to put economic and social framework which recognises that equality is not some sort of an added extra. It is the kind of thing that you get at nice fluffy speaker when you get the serious stuff out of the way. Equality must actually be at the heart of everything we do. And, this is a dangerous time for equality because economic necessity has always been used as the reason why equality and human rights must wait. Well, you know what – equal pay was a bit of an inconvenience as well. Actually, slavery wasn't a bad idea either and so was sending children up chimneys but the reality that we must resist, we must resist economic argument that is coming from IBEC and from the Troika and indeed from many of the political parties on both sides of this island that somehow that we have to get real, that we have an economy to cure. It is as if the human rights and equality were not a fundamental economic issue. And in the Republic the amalgamation of the Equality Authority and the Human Rights issue is a serious attack on everything we stand for. Alan Shatter's explanation for that amalgamation was quite simple. He said that the representation of trade unions on the new body would undermine its independence. I think he might have actually had a point because quite frankly he is right. We do have a vested interest. We have a vested interest in ensuring that human rights and equality are monitored. We should not apologise for that but we should not leave bodies to be appointed by people who wouldn't recognise independence if it bluntly came up and bit them on the arse. I second this motion, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Speakers to the motion.

Theresa Dwyer, CPSU

Good afternoon President and delegates, Theresa Dwyer from the Civil and Public Services Union speaking in favour of the motion. I think when we talk about equality and inequality we need to remind ourselves where we are in 2013 and where we are I think is best shown by the results of a study published by the ESRI and the Equality Authority earlier this year under discrimination in the workplace. The key findings of that study showed that women are more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace than men and there are no surprises there. People in the age group 45-64 are more likely to report work related discrimination particularly in relation to recruitment which would suggest that people under 45 are less likely to report such discrimination. That people with disabilities are more likely to report discrimination in services particularly in health and transport but that those most likely to be at

risk of discrimination are those least likely to know their own rights. And, that only one in ten of those who experience discrimination take action and that those that do tend to be more financially secure and have a better understanding of their rights. So that's where we are in 2013 and we also know and the guest speaker Máire Mulcahy referred to it, we also know that the European Commission figures earlier this year show that the gender pay gap now stands at just under 17% and that is based on the average difference between women and men's hourly earnings across the EU. And to put that another way, it means that women would need to work 59 days more than men to match the earnings of men. That is almost two months. Now in my experience particularly in the civil service when we take cases against the State who in the civil service is the actual employer, they vigorously defend any such cases through all the appeals systems. And, while we are entitled to take a case, the other person is entitled to defend it but the difference here is that where the State is using public funds to defend a case of discrimination, we are using like the rest of you funds derived from members' subscriptions. So, obviously when you take a case it is something that has to be considered very seriously by the trade unions from a financial perspective. I have recently come back from the European Court of Justice in relation to a case that has been through the Equality Tribunal, the Labour Court, the High Court, and the European Court and now it is back in the High Court and we will defend that case. We do have good equality legislation in Ireland and the UK but redress can only happen after discrimination has occurred and only if the individual decides to take case. So if in relation to the reference I made to the earlier report, if one in ten who experience this discrimination take action then if you are in one of the 9 that don't then the discrimination goes unchecked and continues. So, I think if we are to eliminate discrimination and protect those who are most vulnerable, particularly in times of recession, where equality can be seen as a luxury even disposal – we don't have to do it – we can't afford it – as Seamus said it has to be at the heart of everything we do, then we must start by demanding that all bargaining with employers is subject to equality proofing and that it must stand up to the test of an impact assessment.

Where I would like to see us get to is the stage where when employers come to us with their strategy statements and their business plans for the year, that we are in a position that in such circumstances that there is a statutory duty on them to measure any such proposals against equality and fairness then I believe that is the way forward for the trade unions. Please support this motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you, next speaker.

Suzanna Griffin, SIPTU

Suzanna Griffin from SIPTU supporting Motion 16 on Equality. Mr President, Officers and delegates, never before has it been as important to recognise and support the job of work that Congress now faces in reaffirming its commitment to create a fairer, better and more equal society and that is as adverse and diverse as you can possibly imagine. There are some that when they hear the word equality they immediately think of this imaginary battle going on between men and women and there is still a gap there. For instance, the equal pay gap – equal work for equal value – but there is so much more to the dream and vision that is equality. Congress and the trade union movement must be focussed and driven in trying to achieve justice for that. Much of this widening in equality is a result of the economic crisis but equally just as much is due to the direct omission and stonewalling by Governments in addressing many of these challenges. As a movement we are obliged to ensure that any and all diverse groups are represented and that they find us open to including and dealing with issues that they face and how they are impacted by them. This is not just an obligation though delegates, this is the right thing to do.

Philip Jennings spoke yesterday on reshaping, reconnecting and reinventing this great movement of ours and Sheila Nunan from the INTO yesterday told us we were battered, bruised but never beaten. John Douglas yesterday told us of urgency and restlessness that is evident in our trade union movement and other wonderful speakers yesterday – if you remember Michael O'Halloran who is a retired activists who spoke so movingly and funnily of the heroes of 1913 and his experiences in the trade union movement all his years, and his colleague also Margaret Galloway who told us that she represented what our future looked like, and our other colleague who I must complement, Joe Roe from the CPSU who spoke so inspirationally and honestly on his disability – all great speakers. And yes we are all of the above. We are diverse, we are young, we are old, we are black and we are white and we are everything in between, and we are disabled some of us and some of us aren't, and we are men and we are women. And, some of us believe in one God and some of us believe in another but what we also are is that we are proud, honourable and we are mighty and we are determined to continue this battle to face the challenges and issues for a more just and inclusive society in this island of Ireland. I ask you to support this motion.

Joe Roe, CPSU

Joe Roe, CPSU. How do you follow that? Delegates, I am speaking in support of this motion. Equality does not only mean gender equality. It means equality for all. It means disabled, unemployed, trans-gender, everything. We as a movement must push for equality for all people, all sectors of society. It is not simply good enough to only argue about equal pay. We must also talk about equal access, equal opportunity, equality to integrate into society. I am fearful of the way society is going at the moment. We are actually retracting. We are pulling back from all the progress that has been made over the last thirty-one years. Like I came in as a disabled under special competition – they don't happen anymore. As I said yesterday, there has been no improvement in the public sector in the Republic for the last five years. So that is nearly half a generation of people who are not gaining access. Furthermore, and I am going to mention the elephant in the room, Haddington Road in my opinion is a flawed document because nowhere in Haddington Road does it mention disability, or equality. If anything Haddington Road is attacking the working conditions of people who are already under pressure, who are already scraping along the bottom, so delegates I am urging you when you are voting on this, and I hope you vote to support it unanimously, that you take this all in mind. It is not only about the gender of equality, it is about equality within our society because otherwise we are failing. We are failing ourselves and more importantly we are failing the wider community. Thank you delegates.

Fidelma Carolan, UNISON

Fidelma Carolan, UNISON supporting the motion. Right now colleagues from UNISON, UNITE and NIPSA are in Musgrave Park Hospital in the canteen handing out information about Pride and about the lesbian and gay, bi and trans staff forum which was set up right across health and social care. Tomorrow we are Health and Social Care Board in Linenhall Street and on Friday we are in the City Hospital. The trade union movement is the only movement that can wipe out homophobia in the workplace. We are the only people that are in there. Management are willing to work with us. Within the health service in Northern Ireland we now have a staff forum across the health service for every level of staff who identify as lesbian, gay, bi and trans. We are supported by the public health agency with resources and by the trade union. NIPSA are starting the debate within the civil service and within councils, so we really are hoping that certainly within the public sector we will have networks initially supported by trade unions which will really challenge health and social care, and homophobia in health and social care and wider. 50% of people in the health service who identify themselves as gay, bi or trans said that they were not 'out'. And they were not 'out' at work because our members who were working alongside them, who were making homophobia

remarks or off the wall comments which people felt intimidated by. We need to go in there and we need to get our members and challenge them as we go. Within UNISON I think I have one member in schools who is on my LGBT circulation list – one of our members in schools – he is a classroom assistant. The rest are all from the health service and community & voluntary sector. A lot of work needs to be done and the teachers' unions in the room and other trade union colleagues in schools and we really need to start bringing the debate to schools and change people's mind set. And for the young people themselves, so to allow teachers to come out and classroom assistants to come out, allow school meal workers to come out, allow lunchtime supervisors to come out with their partners at lunchtime with the kids. This is a job of work we have to do.

In equal marriage, I am civically partnered – which is a really stupid statement to say, it is really awkward. I am married, I am married in the North, I am from the South. I enjoy much better rights here than any of my friends in the South will get through an equal marriage in the South. We need equal rights. We use the term 'equal marriage', we use the term 'marriage' if it were challenging society's norms. My relationship is as important as my parent's relationship, my brother's relationship and my sister's relationship. In the Republic you will have the chance to vote on equal marriage. I would encourage all your members to vote yes. In the North we are just going to try and overthrow the Assembly and get it in the back door.

Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council

Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council to support Motion 16. I just want to make a small point and just sitting there remembering that actually I had made the same point ten years ago at the ICTU Biennial Conference, could I please ask the organisers of the conference to respect people with disabilities and provide a forum for them to come to the rostrum. There are people who may be able to walk up this step, there are people who whether it is difficult for them or not, there are people here in wheelchairs. The first time we provide a platform for people who can't access, bit of respect every please, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Paddy, if you had checked it, that is the access to the platform – it is called a lift. Paddy, you are out of order. There is access.

Any other speakers on this?

Can we move now to Motion 17. Sorry, before Motion 17, I call on Jack McGinley, Chair of the Standing Orders Committee.

Jack McGinley, Chair of Standing Orders

Colleagues, Standing Orders Committee are asking for an extra 15 minutes for this session so that we can finish the business. I move.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Are we agreed? Agreed. Have we a mover then for Motion 17?

Clare Ronald, CSP

Clare Ronald, Chartered Society of Podiatry. In December last year, a female physiotherapy student and her male friend went out for the evening. They wandered around the shopping mall and enjoyed an ice-cream before going to the cinema. A fairly typical night out. Sadly their evening ended tragically and hit the headlines. This was Delhi and while travelling home on a bus, the girl was gang-raped and both her and her friend were beaten and then thrown from the moving bus. Sadly, thirteen days later she died from her injuries. Yet, while this case was

headline grabbing, it is not unique or isolated. Physical and sexual violence against women is more common than breast cancer. Last month the World Health Organisation published a report showing that an estimated 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a stranger. In their conclusion, the WHO say that violence against women is not a small problem that only occurs in some pockets of society, but rather it is a global public health problem of epidemic proportions requiring urgent action. What is reassuring in the World Health Organisation's Report is actually the variation and the prevalence of violence between communities, countries and regions. This highlights that violence is not inevitable and that it can be prevented. One of the key aspects of prevention which we need to grab is the realisation of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Some preventative action is already being undertaken. In Rio de Janeiro they are using smart phones to mark the threat in ten high risk areas. And in Egypt groups have come together around awareness campaigns reaching people through social media, street theatre and an award winning film. But more needs to be done. In March this year the UN Commission on the Status of Women agreed that all States have an obligation to use all appropriate means of legislative, political, economic, social and administrative nature in order to prevent violence against women and girls. This organisation is rightly proud of its 52% female membership so we need to ask what are we doing to stem this epidemic. In his address the President reminded us that women are largely ignored when history is written. However, it is not just in history that women are ignored. There is a shocking ability for society and individuals to either ignore or normalise violence against women or worse to direct blame at the victim. Even in that shocking case in Delhi last year there were people who sought to blame the victim for the fact that she got on a bus and how common is the phrase 'she was asking for it'? Brothers and sisters these victims need our support. We need to be their voice and we have a role in challenging when we see violence against women normalised, when we see women marginalised or when we see women disempowered.

In 2008 UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon said "there is one universal truth applicable to all countries, cultures and communities. Violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable". If you agree with that sentiment please support that motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Is there a seconder?

Anne Speed, UNISON

President, delegates and friends, Anne Speed from UNISON very happy and proud to second this motion. International solidarity is one of the most important responsibilities that we in the trade union movement strive to live up to. And, the efforts of women worldwide to combat and challenge the violence against us demands now more than ever strong support and solidarity from organised workers across the continents, as we in the trade union movement strive to organise women into trade unions and raise our rights and dignities in the workplace. The recent harrowing stories of the gang rapes in India and Africa shocked many of us to the core of our very being. Last week I watched a BBC 3 documentary as it followed a British born young woman back to the Punjab where she encountered the reality of the degrading and inhuman treatment by some of girl children and women. She wept and I have to say I did too as she stared into the face of a 14 year old beautiful young girl who had been grossly disfigured by an acid attack. And, she also wept when she visited an orphanage for girl children abandoned, some the reporter said were thrown into a bush at two days old because simply they are of little or no value to a backward and patriarchal community. The crimes against women and young girls are not confined to one city, one country, one continent – they are happening across the globe. Millions of women and girls every year are beaten, raped, mutilated, abducted, force to marry against their will and murdered. It is surely time for this violence to stop.

The first global systematic estimates of violence against women by the World Health Organisation as my colleague from CPS has mentioned, estimated that some 30% of women worldwide have been punched, shoved, dragged, threatened with weapons, raped and subjected to violence and rape as we know remains a weapon of war and the statistic even on this island of women, together with their children, being murdered are increasing.

In 2012, the UN announced a fund of just eight million and Bernadette Ségol was today talking about the hordes of money, thousands of billions being stored by our capitalists, just eight million to disperse initiatives in eighteen countries to try and combat this violence against women. I believe in the spirit and intent of this motion. The Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly should commit to financially and politically in assisting this important UN Trust Fund initiative. We in UNISON want to commend wholeheartedly our colleagues in the CSP for placing this important motion and these issues on a trade union agenda. We believe that our ICTU Global Solidarity Committees, North and South, should begin in cooperation with our Women's Committees and our Equality Committees to consider some practical ways we can support the campaign on the Indian Association of Physiotherapists. Sisters and brothers, let us not only support this motion, let us do something about it. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any other speakers to the motion?

Maria Noble, UNISON

Good day delegates, comrades, friends, Maria Noble, UNISON. Violence against women is widespread worldwide and increasing and at its worst extreme hatred against women and blame heaped upon them results in murder or manslaughter, if she can be shown to have nagged or unfaithful. Rape is now regularly used as a tactic to intimidate communities in conflicts large and small around the world, and used under the excuse of teaching lesbians a lesson. Female genital mutilation, which is common in many countries, often involves castrations of young girls, and sewing up of their remaining of their genitalia resulting in infections and birth complications. One in four women in the UK will experience domestic violence in their lifetime and I am sure there is a similar proportion in the Republic. This ongoing situation is an outrage. All of these expressions of violence start in negative attitudes about women. For all of us, men and women, the task is rescinding attitudes by challenging the way that we and others talk about and behave towards women and by taking every opportunity to come out and defend the rights of women.

Myself and a couple of others took on a city-wide domestic violence education programme in schools. Some teachers were concerned that it would be difficult to introduce this with young children but young children were able to tell us about their experiences of domestic violence in their families and their families and their communities. Part of that programme included a play on domestic violence awareness. One young boy came to me at the end of that and said; "that was great Miss, everyone says I am just like my dad but I don't have to be do I"?

Trade unions have been active in tackling gender inequality. This motion is a positive step in that activism. Please support.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

No more speakers to the motion?

We will take a vote on Motion 16, those in favour, carried.

Motion 17, those in favour, carried and can you indicate support for Section 2 'Decent Work, Better Future, Part 2', agreed, and Congress Organisation, Part 3 and Part 4, agreed.

Now can I call upon Deirdre O'Connor and just before you commence Deirdre, can I just remind everyone that first of all the Polling Station is going to remain open over the lunch period and the Global Solidarity Fringe Meeting which is going to focus on the Bangladesh, over what I would call a murder of over 1,200 workers in Bangladesh which was referred to yesterday by Philip Jennings, is going to take place immediately at lunchtime. And, also to point out to you that NERI have a stall upstairs in case some of you haven't got to it yet. They are having a free draw for a mini-iPad and it's going to be drawn at 5.15pm today, so anyone that wants to be entered into that draw you will find them in the coffee room and fill in the form.

Deirdre, thanks.

Deirdre O'Connor, Congress Disability Committee

Colleagues, thank you very much for agreeing to extend the session so that I can do this address. I appreciate the opportunity to address Conference on behalf of the Disability Committee, North and South and in particular the chairperson of the Northern Committee, Berni McCrea, so I am making this address on behalf of both committees.

The two committees meet on a regular basis to consider the issues for our members with disabilities and how to overcome the barriers which prevent people with disabilities from participating in the workplace and in our unions. A recent report which was referred to by Theresa earlier on prepared by the ESRI for the Equality Authority, noted that the period from 2004 to 2010 saw an intense focus on the Republic on disability policy issues but their analysis indicated that this did not translate into improvements in the area of employment. People with a disability have considerably lower labour market participation rates at 36% in 2010 and a considerably higher unemployment rate at 22% than those without a disability. And, the rising tide of the boom years did not bring the rates for employment for people with disabilities up. It is also a concern that the employment rate for people with a disability in Ireland is lower than is typical in European countries. This report also shows that those who are in employment are more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace than those without disabilities and we noted during the year a report from the National Disability Authority, sorry in 2011, which reported a really alarming hardening in attitudes to disability, including a decrease in people's stated level of comfort in working with the person with a disability and that was particularly acute in the area of mental health.

The Disability Committee's work focusses on how difficulties can be overcome. At our annual Disability Seminars we bring together members with and without disabilities, experts and activists in the area of disability and employment and trade union leaders. The seminars raise awareness of disability issues as well as giving an opportunity for unions to share their own good practice. The 2012 seminar looked at the impact of the economic crisis on people with disabilities. We were delighted to be joined at that seminary by disability rights campaigners who shared their experience of the cuts to services such as personal assistants, and mobility allowances. And, many of you would have seen the programme recently, the Prime Time programme, about the huge impact that the freezing of the mobility allowances has had and the need to have those mobility allowances reinstated, because these services are critical to enabling some people with disabilities to access and to remain in employment. There was broad agreement at the seminar that unions and people with disabilities and their representative organisations need to ensure that services which are delivered by union members are well resourced and of high quality. And, we had a number of the service providers there who employ union members to provide services for people with disabilities.

Sometimes it is an effort made to put those two things in conflict and you know to say that services have to be reduced because the people who deliver them have to be well-paid, and that is a policy we just have to go and say, look these services have to be well resources so that people can deliver them and that the service users can also avail of them.

At the seminar we also heard concerns expressed about the impact of welfare reform in Northern Ireland on people with disabilities, including the replacement of the Disability Living Allowance with personal independence payments, and the introduction of work capability assessment. Concerns are being expressed that these are not reforms and they are not about a fairer system, but they are just simply a means to reduce the benefits and payments to people with disabilities.

The committee in the Republic continues to monitor the reporting of a 3% target for the employment of people with disabilities in the public service. For the first time the 3% target was met in 2011, and we welcome this. The NDA has worked very hard to ensure that reporting is carried out accurately and sensitively in the various services but we remain concerned at the failure of some State bodies – notably the HSE – to adequately provide data about their employment of people with disabilities. And, as my colleague Joe Roe has already stated, we are also concerned that the moratorium on recruitment generally in the public service has impacted on the employment of people with disabilities and importantly, about planning for the future and now the 3% target is going to be met in the future when some of the cohort, who are employed under special competitions, a lot of them are coming to retirement age and how the 3% target is going to be met in the future.

The committees are committed to ensuring that people with disabilities are recognised and represented in our unions. In October, 2011 we launched a revised Code of Practice for trade unions on disability issues. The amendments to the Code focussed on the area particularly of mental health difficulties and many unions have had initiatives in the last couple of years on looking at the issue of mental health which is a huge challenge. We reiterate our call for all unions to ratify the Code, to ensure protection for their members with disabilities and also those who work with the unions who have disabilities.

During the period since the last BDC we have also worked to ensure that the benefit of the Disability Champions programme continued to be felt in unions. While the funding for the programme was finished in 2011, training has continued in individual unions through the Trade Union Skillnet and through the Petal training in Northern Ireland and we are also delighted now that that learning will now be incorporated into the Trade Union Studies Award which is being proposed.

Finally, and as I said yesterday the committee has contributed to the Commission on Trade Unions highlighting the need to consider the representation of people with disabilities and other under-represented groups in any restructuring of Congress and the unions. The continued role of the established committees such as the Disability Committee is essential in ensuring that links between individual unions and Congress remain strong.

Finally, I just want to thank all the members of the committees who have contributed over the years, the affiliates who have supported our events and just to ensure that we continue to work to protect the rights of our members with disabilities. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you very much Deirdre.

Conference, just to remind you that Standing Orders Report yesterday indicated that we would be looking for support for the polling that is going to go on during this lunch break and you are asked to provide that support. Thanks very much. We stand adjourned till 2.30pm.

Wednesday 3rd July, 2013

Afternoon Session

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

This section of the Executive Council Report, deals with Section 2, 'Decent Work, Better Jobs', Part 2, 3 and 4. Could I ask the General Secretary to introduce the report.

David Begg, General Secretary of Congress

Thanks very much President, actually, Conference I just really want to give you an update on the matters that are covered on Page 47 of the report because there were two conversations I suppose really. First of all Patricia, Eamon Devoy, Esther and myself had a meeting with Richard Bruton on Thursday and his officials and then as I mentioned this morning, I had a conversation last night with Eamon Gilmore about the collective bargaining issue. Now concerning the collective bargaining Minister Bruton said to us that he does intend to bring forward proposals in this regard and that some months ago his officials sought submissions from us and indeed the other parties which were provided, and what he said was is that he intends to construct a kind of synthesis of all those views and bring forward proposals based on that. That is consistent with what the Tánaiste said to me last night, that he had spoken to the Taoiseach about this and as part of the Programme for Government they are committed to it and that proposals would be tabled in the autumn. So I suppose I can say confidently that there will be a legal framework for collective bargaining I think but quite what will be in it I don't know. And the quality will really depend, I suppose, on the quality of that political agreement between the Tánaiste and the Taoiseach. Now for our part we obviously have to keep pushing along on this. We have opened up a number of fronts as you would have known from the report concerning different organs of the ILO and the United Nations that we can protest to concerning the lack of collective bargaining in Ireland and we intend to continue to do that, and in that regard Esther has arranged for Professor Keith Ewing, who has been working with us on this, to address a fringe meeting here tomorrow morning at 8.30am, and if you are interested in the subject I think it might be useful to attend because he is extremely knowledgeable about this. I think you will find out at least what the possibilities are for it. But, on a domestic level I think we can be reasonably sure that the political agreement will happen but quite how good it will be remains to be seen.

In the matter of Registered Employment Agreements we also discussed these with Minister Bruton- to be honest that was the primary purpose of our meeting with him in the aftermath of the Supreme Court decision which was a very disappointing one, and in terms of trying to get an assessment from him and from the Department about what precisely the legal implications were, and I am talking particularly about how they affect Part 3 of the 1946 Industrial Relations Act because in effect what the Supreme Court said was this was ultra-vireo Section of the Constitution. Now, in 2012 some further legislation was brought forward based earlier court judgements affecting Joint Labour Committees and this was intended to fireproof the Joint Labour Committees from any further attack but again the problem is that legislation is rooted in the 1946 Act and a precautionary position was made at that time to construct the Act in such a way that all future Registered Employment Agreements would in fact be fireproofed under this provision of part 3 but it now looks as if that won't stand because the Supreme Court in saying that Part 3 of the Act was ultra-vireo Section 15 of the Constitution means that anything that is based on it in any way is in itself tainted I suppose or vulnerable to further attack. And I think the outcome really from our discussion with the Minister was that new legislation completely will have to be brought forward which reconstructs in effect what

was in Part 3 of the 1946 Act and everything will have to be built around that. It seemed also from the discussion that will involve a restriction of the areas and scope of Registered Employment Agreements in the future. Registered Employment Agreements up to now in some cases like in the construction industry, in the electrical contracting industry have covered a broad range of conditions of employment as well as pay and what he was indicating to us was that it won't be possible to have coverage for that range of conditions in the future. And, I will give it to you as what I suspect myself but he hasn't said this nor has any of his officials said this, but I think that there is a very real possibility that if proposals emerge that they will be confined to pay and pensions which would really be quite limiting I suppose in terms of everything we had used to covering before.

I think just to give a context to all of this, you see if you look back over a few years, particularly in the mid-2000s, we became concerned that the regulation of the labour market here was very limited. I mean at that time there were 17 Labour Inspectors covering the whole of the Republic and we made representations to have that changed and got very little support at the time from Government. And, then there was a development in 2004 with the Accession States of the new countries coming into Europe and the Government of the day made the decision to open the labour market here completely from day one, something the United Kingdom did and Sweden did at the same time. But, the difficulty of doing that from the standpoint of an unregulated labour market was that people were going to exploit it and this is precisely what happened because if you open up a labour market of 2 million people to 70 million people are going to take advantage and very quickly we had disputes like Irish Ferries which demonstrated that. And, in that particular knowledge we agreed towards the end of 2005 with the Government of the day on a fairly comprehensive suite of legislative measures which would have more tightly regulated the labour market but in essence would have applied a range of employment protection standards such that it wouldn't really matter what the size of the labour market was or where a person came from, they would be reasonably protected under legislation and one of the key provisions of that was the establishment of the National Employment Rights Authority. Now since then for reasons which most of you probably know, kind of a counter-movement from employers, a) the suite of legislation was largely abandoned by the Fianna Fáil/PD Government and subsequently I would say that the Employment Rights Authority leeway has been seriously curtailed in terms of what it is possible for them to do and that has been added to by the adverse judgement of the Supreme Court. So, taken in the round, if you look at the situation – we started off looking for a much better regulated labour market, we have ended up going through a cycle in which we appeared to achieve that but which various attacks from employers through the legal process has meant not only that that didn't happen, but that what did happen was deconstructed and that what had been in existence under the 1946 Act has also been substantially deconstructed so that we are left really institutionally with not much more than the National Minimum Wage and we wouldn't even have had that if the Labour Party had not restored that after Fianna Fáil had reduced it when they came into Government the last time around. And, since then, we have been depending in essence on the Labour Party to get political agreement within the Coalition to re-establish Joint Labour Committees for instance and also now to try and get established a new regime for Registered Employment Agreements and the collective bargaining process as well. So, this is not a happy situation and as we explained to the Minister the other night, the difficulty of the position we are in is that we are dealing with crisis situations all the time. Something happens in the courts, the officials of the Department try to put together a formula which will shore up to a limited extent what has been deconstructed by the courts but we are into a place now where you get a series of these individual measures which looked at in the round gives you the impression of a very shaky institutional framework for collective bargaining in the country. So, it has been quite a challenge to put together something which will leave us in a place where we can properly defend the interests of workers in the future but nevertheless this is what we are

engaged in. And, it really is all happening in a broader context I suppose that the whole settlement of the Troika, not the settlement so much as the Memorandum of Understanding, it is all based on the notion of an internal wage devaluation as a proxy for an inability to devalue the currency to restore competitiveness they select the issue that I tried to deal with in my opening remarks here yesterday morning, but you are left with the possibilities of a labour market which is very liberal and which is gravitating towards a market clearing rate for wages which would be quite distinct from the other social market economies in Europe in the future and not a position, I think, Ireland should be in. One of the things that my colleagues and I try to impress on the Minister when we met him the last day was that some longer-term thinking needs to be done about this about where Ireland is expected to be in several years' time when the Troika has all gone – what kind of a country will we have and how will we be a complete outlier in a more deeply integrated European currency zone and doesn't appear to be a viable proposition. So that is the task that we are facing at the moment. It is very much a work in progress and we can only hope that ultimately it will be successful in some respects but successful to a degree that is ultimately meaningful in terms of the lives of workers. Thanks.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you David. Before I call on the movers and seconders of Motion 18, we found a room key card for the Fitzwilliam Hotel. I don't know what room number it was but it is here if someone knows that they have lost it.

Patricia, can I call on you to move Motion 18.

Patricia King, Vice President of Congress

Thank you President, Patricia King, Vice President of Congress and SIPTU. By way of description of the issue we have before us in relation to collective bargaining, I thought it was worth just taking a quick run through what it is like for a worker in an organisation or company where there is no collective bargaining and it runs something like this, and in our own union we are very familiar with this. So I am a transport worker employed in a company on the outskirts of Dublin. The work in that company can be very difficult and there are lots of problems with rosters. The rest periods are short and the entire system is geared to suit the employer's needs. Little attention is given to the effect of their decisions on the lives of workers. There is 110 people employed in the company and I joined the union and so have 66 of my colleagues. The union has approached the company to have discussions on their behalf in relation to all the issues of concern. The company has refused to meet them and they say we don't need to deal with a trade union, we have our own worker Representative Council in this organisation. We talk to that Council – they are very reasonable – we selected them and we know the outcome of any discussion we are going to have with them. So we don't need to do trade unions. The union can't make any progress on our behalf. The company won't go to the Labour Court, the company won't go to the LRC. If we take a case under the 2004 Act we won't have any choice but to declare our union membership and all 66 will have to declare it. And when we do that we have a risk of being sacked. The union organised a protest. What happened when we had a protest? Deep pockets – we were injunctioned. So we are in a stalemate. The union can't progress any claims collectively on our behalf. The only thing that they can do for us is to represent us individually. But we are committed to fighting for our right to collectively bargain and we have been doing this for three years. That, colleagues, is a stark live example of the predicament that thousands of Irish workers in the Republic of Ireland find themselves in. And I know that it is difficult for workers who have never experienced that position, who have always had collective bargaining, very, very difficult to try and even attempt to get in to the space of what that means but that is the reality for thousands for this the year of 2013. Why is it the case? Well it is the case because the Constitution of the Republic recognises the right of citizens to form a union but it does not oblige an employer to negotiate or engage with a union. In fact, Irish law actively protects

the right of an employer not to recognise a trade union and to run its business on a non-union basis and guess what – they call that the voluntarist system. So what are the options? The options for workers are fairly stark. You take on the risk, you risk your own employment if you take on the fight and you suffer the consequences of that employer with the deep pockets. And the 2001 and the 2004 Acts did attempt to provide a remedy but what happened. They were torn down fairly quickly by our friends in the Supreme Court and that followed a pattern of behaviour by the Irish judiciary against workers over many decades in our State. What about the remedy from Europe? Well actually the decisions of Viking, Laval and Rüffert – they didn't help our cause at all because the European Court of Justice chose to prefer the rights of capital and free movement over the rights of collective labour. The Lisbon Treaty then meant that the Charter of Fundamental Rights was legally binding. And in the Demir case the European Court of Human Rights took a different course. We have obviously as has been mentioned, we have Article 28, we have the ILO Convention, and we have all of those things and we are still in the same place. What's the employer saying? The employers are saying we don't need to have this debate at all. Don't be having that debate, we are complaint, we don't need it and if we do have it, investment will run out of the State, competitiveness will decline, growth will fall – all of that will happen. The world as we know it will end if they get collective bargaining – don't give it to them. But, they are saying far worse than that. They are saying 'accepted bodies' should be recognised for collective bargaining purposes in the Labour Court and everywhere else, they are saying that trade unions should have to prove that they are representative. They are saying that the onus of proof should lie with trade unions in comparative cases that are made and they are saying if you are victimised, if you are sacked, well wouldn't you get a remedy out of the Unfair Dismissals a year later – what's wrong with you – accept that. That is what they are saying. They are also saying something very serious as well – they are saying the right to strike for unions, for workers should be restricted to where there is a grade with a majority vote in favour of that strike. What are the Government saying? The Government are saying that we have a Programme for Government. They have signalled in that that they have a review of the operation of the 2004 Act to see if they are compliant with the European cases that have happened. What is the Minister saying? The Minister is saying – I want to improve that voluntarist system, that is what he saying. What is this movement saying? This movement is saying there should be legislation enacted to provide for statutory recognition for the right to organise and collectively bargain. They are saying that workers in trade unions who want to be represented by their trade unions should have that right respected by employers and this movement is saying that accepted bodies, where they exist, should have the same governance rules as trade unions. Employer dominance should be outlawed. On victimisation we are saying the current protections are wholly inadequate. There should be a protective order which should be available so that a worker remains in employment until their case is determined. Interference inducement, penalisation – they should all be outlawed as part of any legislation. How do we achieve this when we have failed to do it in the last one hundred years. Well like in any negotiation that any trade union official goes into, there is one thing we don't have the luxury of doing and that is denying the reality of where we are at. And what have we got? We have a Government which is made up of two parts and in those two parts there is one group who are completely embedded on the employers' side. They are so embedded actually that they are working hand in glove with those business interests to make sure that all of these people in here in this room who are representing, lobbying and pushing for this never get it. That is why you are hearing the word 'voluntarist' and there are five people, five people in that Government who have some chance of delivering it. Now, ideally with something so large for this movement to achieve you would expect that anybody left of centre would push and push hard to achieve this.

I have to say that I was extremely disappointed recently to read the debate on the Private Members' Motion in relation to 1913, and it was a motion put down by the Technical Group in

Dáil Éireann, and I was very disappointed because some of the far left contributors on this issue of collective bargaining – they are gone that far left that they are now agreeing with the far right in their condemnation of this movement. And I say, delegates, there is only one way to achieve what we want and this is what will make the history for this Congress for decades to come, for all union members, workers in this State, so let us all resolve at this conference to join together to forget about that useless criticism, to put the strength into saying let us lobby for the support for this motion at every political level to ensure that at the end of the hundred years, we can achieve Larkin's goal of 1913. Thank you delegates.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Well done Patricia.

Eamon Devoy, TEEU

Eamon Devoy, TEEU seconding the motion on behalf of the Executive Council and, as Jack McGinley said, follow that!

Just a couple of things. Before we talk about what we would like and how we would go about achieving something we would like, I just want to reflect for a couple of minutes on what we have recently lost by way of labour legislation. First of all, the Registered Employment Agreements were wiped out on the 9th May. That leaves an awful lot of workers in this country faced with a situation in future that that is really the end of centralised bargaining, or sorry collective bargaining in any structured way in this country. And it is a very quick to sense too back to the 'master and servant' approach where the employer holds all the cards and the employee has no opportunity to defend themselves against that. This followed on the 'Grace Fried Chicken case in the High Court in 2011 when the Employment Regulation Orders were struck out. And this followed on the 2001 and 2004 Industrial Relations Amendment Act of 2007, when in 2007 the Supreme Court struck down a number of sections of that legislation in the Ryanair Judgement. So, one after another, slowly but surely, the things that Philip talked about yesterday of forces inside and outside of this country working against the labour movement all across this globe are slowly taking hold. And, if we believe that by asking Governments in this country or any other country for what we would like and hoping that we are going to achieve it, well I think we will be fooling ourselves to be quite honest.

IBEC were in the media last Friday and Brendan McGinty said, and I quote the three paragraphs in the main element of what he said: "The current generally accepted legal position in Ireland is that while workers have a right to join a trade union, employers do not have to negotiate with trade unions", reinforcing their position. "Irish labour law provides for flexibility at company level in how relations with workers are managed and disputes resolved". That is the second point he made. And the third point he said: "It was imperative that the foundation of our collective bargaining arrangements must remain voluntary", and there we have it again and Patricia mentioned the voluntary element of it. What all that boils down to is 'no change – we are in charge and are staying in charge'.

The Government in their Programme for Government in Fine Gael and Labour are on the record as saying that in the lifetime of this Government they are going to reform the current law on employment rights to engage in collective bargaining. Well, this is one hundred years on from 1913 and if we are just waiting around to ask for that and hope to get it, anyone that knows when you are negotiating on a serious matter that is of fundamental importance to you, there has to be a consequence for the other side. And, quite frankly, we must realise that when we are going into these discussions and discussions are to be had and we are promised discussions but the employers are promised equal discussions, that we are saying that we must have collective bargaining rights to comply with ILO Conventions – we are entitled to that. We say that we must have collective bargaining rights in concert with the European Court of

Human Rights so we are saying the legislation that has to be put in place is the REAs and the JLCs need to be put back in place and that has to happen from this conference. We have to say that this must happen by the end of the year and I will conclude by saying this: if it is not a hundred years on from 1913, if it's not, we better come together very soon at the end of this year and decide what we are going to do about it. I commend the motion to conference.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Eamon. Speakers.

Tracy Osmont, UNITE

Tracy Osmont from UNITE. Workers throughout Europe have this right. Workers in the US and Canada have this right. Workers here in Belfast have this right but this right is denied by workers just a relatively few miles down the road in the Republic. Workers do not have the right to collective bargaining despite the fact that we signed up to ILO Treaties and despite the fact that we adopted the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Conference, this is not an oversight and this is not a matter of priorities. This is a conscious and deliberate policy to suppress labour in favour of capital. Collective bargaining is one of the most basic rights workers have in employment but the Irish Government seem intent on suppressing it because for them this is about making the Irish economy safe for profits and employers' privilege and to do so at the expense of the workers, workers' rights, working conditions and living standards. Conference, UNITE welcomes the commitment in the Programme for Government to introduce a statutory right for collective bargaining. However, we should be aware that this commitment may be watered down or furthermore ignored altogether despite what they are saying. When Minister Richard Bruton went into the Annual Conference of the Small Firms Association he assured them that he had no plans to bring in the right to collective bargaining despite the commitment in the Programme for Government and not surprisingly he was roundly applauded. IBEC has also up the stakes claiming that collective bargaining was to them a red line issue. Well, Conference, I think we should respond in kind both to the Government and to IBEC and let them know in no uncertain terms that anything short of the right to collective bargaining that is enjoyed by workers throughout the industrial world is absolutely unacceptable to the trade union movement because for us collective bargaining is too a red line issue. Please support.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Tracy.

John McLoughlin, CWU UK

President, members, John McLoughlin. I am Branch Chair of the Northern Ireland Teleconference. We have 2,000 members here in Northern Ireland and we deal mainly in the communications industry and I have the right to support this. The reason being is that our union was mainly established through BT but now kind of serves call-centres and non-BT members but the majority of our members would be BT. And, historically we have always had a trade union in Northern Ireland fully supported by BT, working with facilities and everything for collective bargaining rights for our members. Why I am rising to support this is because that right of collective bargaining is being denied to BT employees in the South of Ireland. Now, nobody knows exactly how many BT employees are in the South of Ireland ok, but a substantial, a lot more than people think – I think we are over 1,000 but no matter how robust we have tried and our colleagues CWU Ireland to get those same rights for BT employees in the South of Ireland, that has been denied. Which is hypocritical of BT, a corporate company. The reason we know that BT won't give collective bargaining rights to the South is because they operate in over 30 countries throughout the world and what they said, the only reason we are recognising you in Northern Ireland and the UK is because of historically and if we were to recognise the union, BT employees in the South, given them collective bargaining rights

then we would have to give that to employees throughout Spain, France, all over Asia, South America. That is hypocritical of a company like that and I rise fully to support this here and I know our colleagues in the South of Ireland have strenuously worked hard for to get the same conditions, collective bargaining rights for our colleagues who work for BT in the North. So, I rise fully to support that.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you John. Any other speakers to the motion? Ok, can we move on then to Motion No. 19, standing in the name of IMPACT, 'Anti-Victimisation Legislation for Union Activists, including Protection of Whistle-blowers'.

Matt Staunton, IMPACT

Matt Staunton, Impact moving Motion 19, which demands legislation to ensure workers do not suffer discrimination either because they are union members or activists, or for revealing illegal or unethical practices in the workplace. 'Jack Ireland' is a real person but 'Jack Ireland' is not his real name. Jack lost his job because he blew the whistle on €4 million worth of fraud in his workplace. Jack eventually got justice because he had the practical and moral support of his union and his colleagues. He doesn't want me to use his real name because he fears that as a whistle-blower he is labelled as a troublemaker and won't find work again. In his own words, Jack waited until he was 110% sure before he reported the fraud. His reward was a four year ordeal. It began with him being disciplined for not reporting it earlier. He then had his own honesty questioned. The company he had helped put him through years of harassment, disciplinary hearings – Jack appealed and won them all. But his ordeal still culminated in him being thrown out of his job. The local Impact rep who supported and represented him puts it simple; he says in Jack's case a multinational company took on an individual and tried to destroy him for doing something right. There is the corporate reflex whistle-blowers are marked as trouble and seen as a threat. Jack chose to blow the whistle but colleagues that choice is no longer open to any of your members regardless of where they work because in the South the 2011 Criminal Justice Act now means that any workers in the public, private, semi-state or community sector can be prosecuted, fined and even jailed if they discover financial malpractice in the workplace and fail to report it. You have no choice but that is not all. That law leaves workers doubly vulnerable by also making it illegal to report an offence falsely or recklessly. This 'catch 22' means that workers if they hesitate or aren't sure but they also face criminal charges if they turn out to be wrong. All the responsibility seems to be on the worker. Yes, as Jack discovered, protections against victimisation of whistle-blowers are incredibly weak and effectively non-existent unless you are a union member. Employees who are wrongly dismissed after they report suspected malpractice can only seek redress under unfair dismissals legislation and as Jack will tell you that doesn't mean that you will get your job back even if you win. That is why we need laws that give immediate redress and remedies to victimised whistle-blowers. Otherwise employers will simply opt for the nuclear option of dismissal and take their low risk chances in the Employment Appeals Tribunal. And when I say immediate redress or remedy, I am saying the right to go into work the next day and carrying out your duty, carrying on with your life and not facing punishment. The Programme for Government promised a Whistle-blowers Act to protect public servants who expose maladministration. Today I note the Protected Disclosures Bill of 2013 was published by the Government. You could welcome some aspects of this. It is much broader than the public service – it covers most workers in the workplace. It does have paragraphs on immunities, the right to privacy and the right not to be sued. However, it goes down the same road as the Unfair Dismissals Act for the remedy. True, you don't have to have service of more than a year if you put up the whistleblowing umbrella. True, it offer up to five years pay if you are found to win your case but it still leaves you frozen out for a year or two knowing that you will never work again in that company and maybe nowhere else.

This issue isn't just about worker protection. It is also about ensuring that crime and malpractice are brought to light to the benefit of our economy, our communities and our country. The lack of legal clarity and the absence of whistle-blower protection are barriers to the timely and comprehensively reporting of illegal and unethical practices in banks and other workplaces. We all need comprehensive legislation that protects all workers and goes beyond financial matters, to cover all corporate engagements, consumer protection, health & safety, environmental damage, workers' rights and the right to be a trade union member and an activist. 'Jack Ireland's' story is just one of scores of similar tales of workers victimised for doing the right thing or bullied or harassed by management for seeking vindication of their legal rights at work or exercising their constitutional right to join a union and encouraging others to do so. Please support the growing number of 'Jack Irelands' by putting your weight behind the Congress campaign for legal protection for whistle-blowers and union activists. Please start by supporting Motion 19. Thanks you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Seconder for this please, formally seconded. Thank you. Speakers.

Marjorie Trimble, UNISON

President, delegates, Marjorie Trimble, UNISON supporting Motion 19. Despite the recent UK legal protection against victimisation for whistle-blowers in the NHS, the evidence shows that one in three NHS workers who had voiced concerns about bad practices in the service has faced reprisals. Health workers are most afraid of raising concerns about bullying, staffing levels, meeting Government targets and waiting lists. A UNISON survey shows that over 30% of nurses, midwives, porters and cleaners said that the NHS Trust would not welcome reports of major problems. There is a reality gap between Government initiatives to promote whistleblowing and what is actually happening on the ground. We know employers are failing in their duty of care to patients and staff by burying their heads in the sand about the real impact of cuts in services. It is unacceptable that many workers do not know that their Health Trust has a policy on whistleblowing. The news this week that almost one million of potentially irregular payments were made by the Northern Health Trust is a case in point. Where else in the system is this happening. Workers are too afraid to come forward to tell us. Employers say they have whistleblowing policies easily accessible to everyone but these policies must be clear and open. It is essential for all staff working in the health care to be able to raise concerns about such abuses and standards of patient care or staff safety without the fear of reprisals. Please support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Marjorie.

Noel Dunphy, MANDATE

President, delegates, my name is Noel Dunphy, MANDATE trade union and I want to speak in favour of the motion before conference today. As a delegate from MANDATE union which predominantly represents workers in the retail and the bar trade particularly in the South, I feel that this proposed motion and final result of it is overdue. As we all know there is existing legislation which dates from the 1930s through to the present day, various court cases North and South across from the House of Commons etc., which ranges from joining a union etc. but we need to modernise. Motion 19, the idea behind this is to modernise it to make it suitable for modern day employees. If you are going to whistle-blow on something you are more than likely to have a reason to do it. It is for fiscal reasons, not for personal reasons. I will give you three examples and then I am gone. In particular adverse treatment in the recruitment process is still common practice. One of the most common unfair questions and illegal questions which is asked in the South is, and is then put down as a mistake, are you a member of a union. Think about it – that is one. Our current financial crisis it could be argued is a

direct link to group thinking of bank directors. If we had this legislation back in 2007, I am not saying that it would have, there is a possibility that we would not owe €64 billion. Somebody would have the courage to come forward in confidence and not to be victimised. As we all know in this room the increase in precarious and insecure employment of recent years has given employers a disproportionate amount of power over the employees. What this motion will do if passed, and hopefully it will, is to rebalance the power and give workers more confidence back to join a trade union, stand up for their rights both individually and collectively. I urge you to support the motion. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any other speakers? Ok.

I call on Motion 20 then 'Freelance Workers', NUJ.

Gerry Curran, NUJ

President, colleagues, Gerry Curran, Cathaoirleach of the Irish National Union of Journalists. This motion, Motion No. 20 about Freelance Workers is basically to seek protection for what we call 'atypical' workers such as freelance journalists - low-paid, session musicians – low-paid, voice over actors – low-paid, all vulnerable workers. It is simply a motion calling for us as a union to have the right to negotiate collectively for them. It is a disgrace that we are forbidden to do so. It makes a show of Ireland internationally that we can't because we are in breach of international obligations across Europe and across the world. My members are up in arms, my members are incensed that in 2013 Ireland is so flagrantly in breach of basic human rights law. We are forbidden to do so despite reports commissioned by Government which said the law needs changing, despite those ILO and UN charters which guarantee such rights, despite twenty years of partnership and promises – partnership based on broken promises failed and this time it did as well. Successive Governments, plans, discussions and agreements have shown and have said that we would have collective bargaining as a law which would include and be extended to freelance atypical workers. Yet, the Competition Act and the Competition Authority remain in place acting like the continuity PDs on Red Bull, ready to prosecute, criminalise my union and my members if we dare ask for a fair, agreed rate of pay for low-paid freelancers. They treat low-paid workers as an elite, unlawful cartel. They treat them as undertakings rather than as people and despite savour rattling they don't treat the real elite the same - real elite such as big lawyers, such as consultant private doctors with big fees – they don't treat them the same. Our freelance members are simply economically dependent workers largely scraping a living. They are not oil barons fixing prices, they do not need to be part of this Competition Act – leave them alone.

We are, as I say, without the right to bargain for them as freelancers. We aren't allowed in a way to associate and join a trade union fully because without that right to bargain, the right to association is void of meaning and is evacuated of purpose. The primary EU law recognises the right to fair and just working conditions yet Ireland hides behind the so-called and only alleged instruction from the EU/IMF to not alter its Competition Act. And, despite a clarification from that source that this was untrue, Ireland still is in breach of its ILO and ECHR undertakings and obligations, still maintaining and still making us have to complain internationally to the ILO that it hasn't changed the Act. Colleagues, isn't it ironic that one hundred years after James Larkin organised atypical workers on the docks of Dublin, we are still looking at the tawdry beauty contest of workers waiting around to be selected, waiting for unspecified remuneration and being denied the right to collective bargaining in the process. It is a bit like a Rose of Tralee without the fragrance of Dáithí Ó Sé to compere it! Indeed it might be said that the Competition Act defenders and Competition Authority are the William Martin Murphys of 2013. Finally, can I say in this centenary of the Great Lock-Out, what better honour to it than to legalise collective bargaining for atypical workers. What

more of a duty should bear on the minds of the Labour members of Government than to end this great injustice because that is what we trade unionists elected them to do. Thank you, support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Gerry. Are you seconding it Seamus?

Seamus Dooley, NUJ

Seamus Dooley, NUJ seconding. Ten years, well more than ten years ago, the Competition Authority found itself with nothing to do. Financial institutions of the State were behaving well and so was everyone else so they targeted my colleague in SIPTU, Jane Boushell. Jane was engaged in the anti-competitive practice of representing people who are called 'voice-over' actors – people who make silly ads that annoy you in the morning. And Jane Boushell was dragged to the steps of the High Court with her union because what she was doing was threatening the very foundations of the Irish economy and this is no laughing matter. Had Jane Boushell and her union in the big house been allowed to continue what they were doing the very foundations of the Irish economy could have been in ruins. We could have ended up with the IMF. We could have ended up with the Troika running out affairs. That's the logic of the Competition Authority. The Competition Authority which has been allowed to shoot fish in a barrel, who have been allowed by successive Governments to break collective agreements. When we make promises as trade unions we are expected to keep them, if we don't we hear the whinging and the moans from our friend Turlough and all the rest of them that we are acting in bad faith. Towards 2016 contained a specific commitment and as far as I am concerned that commitment is still there and no pay agreement, no national pay agreement has given anyone a licence to renege on that promise. But, I think it would be a mistake to think that this is some sort of aberration. At the time we were a little bit naïve. We were still in social partnership and we thought that this was a rouge element within the Competition Authority but it has now emerged throughout Europe that the de-recognition of the right of freelancers to work is clearly part of an international plan to regard the right of trade unions to represent workers as price-fixing, because there are those who see everything we do as being an impediment to competition and if it is an impediment to competition, it is an impediment to profit and we therefore interfere with the rights of capitalism. So I would ask you in passing this motion, as you will because you have been doing it for years, I would ask you to recognise that this actually is time for action not just for freelance workers and it is no longer good enough for us on this issue and on the issue of collective bargaining to adopt the Fr Ted approach – down with this sort of thing – we probably need a little bit more steel on this one. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any more speakers? No one wants to follow you Seamus!

Can we move on then to Motion No. 21 standing in the name of the Executive Council. It is going to be proposed by Maria Morgan on Employment & Social Cohesion.

Maria Morgan, NIPSA

Thank you President. Conference, comrades, Maria Morgan on behalf of the Executive Council to move Motion 21. Comrades, this motion talks about excessive human suffering and that language isn't exaggerated because that is the term we earn across this island. The live register in the Republic equates to 13.7% unemployment with youth unemployment between 18-24 year olds at 30%. In the North the unemployment rate is 68,000 with 19% youth unemployment and we are the highest in the North, we are the highest of all the twelve regions. However, these figures again are probably understated because there is under-employment where part-time work, zero contracted hours, hides the real extent of the

problem. Alongside the fact that forced emigration in Ireland is rising. Unemployment and youth unemployment in particular has a serious knock-on effect in society. There are social consequences that we should be really concerned about. And there are also consequences for the individual in terms of mental health and the health and well-being of the individual when they find themselves unemployed. But what is clear from all of the actions detailed in the motion is that we need to address these issues seriously and urgently. So, what is the alternative and where does the money come from. That is the question that we are asked when we talk about alternatives. Because there are alternatives and there are proposals that would leverage additional investment into the Irish economy to boost jobs and growth. Across the trade unions including the excellent reports from NERI, we have researched and we have proposed many ways to fund an investment stimulus which would, among other things, reduce long-term unemployment and boost the long-term growth which would restore money back into the economy and some of those proposals include things like introducing a financial tax which would raise €500 million annually across Ireland. We have proposed to broaden apprenticeships and to introduce the Youth Guarantee to get young people skilled up and back into the workforce. We proposed no and an absolute outright no to privatisation and to the selling off of public assets to pay off the failed debts of the bank because in the North of Ireland in particular and this would be the same in the Republic, there is a path for privatisation and we have to stay away from that path. What we need to do is to restore recovery and instead of public services being sold off and the jobs that go with it, we need to get that back into public ownership and gain and restore the economy by getting that back and we have made those points whenever we meet with the politicians and MLAs in the Assembly. We need to increase revenue through taxation to pursue the tax fugitives. We need to ensure that large corporations contribute their fair share instead of capitalising it at the expense of our members. All this could lead to the reverse of the downward spiral. Added to that investment and infrastructure and strong labour market policies to promote employment would help families back into work, who in turn would start spending and that in turn would then help our comrades in the private sector.

Cuts to welfare must end and a social security safety net must be available to all those who find that they are forced on to the dole queue because their employer can't afford to keep them or their factory closes. We need to support them and we need the safety net again in the welfare state and in social welfare system.

Conference, we must act urgently to support our members and their families across this island. And, if we don't act collectively, we will become irrelevant and our members will not forgive us. There is work being done that can offer credible and practical alternatives and we must lead from the front. This movement must show the working class that we can offer them a real socialist alternative and that is based on the proposals that are in our documents and our research. A real socialist alternative that can get them out of their misery so that the excessive human suffering that we talk about in this motion will end and we can say that we have made a difference. The motion states that Congress will resolve to campaign actively to achieve these objectives, so I would like us to come back to this BDC in two years' time and talk about the actions we have taken and not again to be talking about the continued suffering and misery of our members. Please support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Maria.

Phil Ní Sheaghdha

Phil Ní Sheaghdha on behalf of the Executive Council supporting the motion. Colleagues, ICTU has made the case for an alternative approach to the current Government policy of austerity and their prioritisation of the servicing of debt and this case has been made well by ICTU and

it is based on an investment stimulus and infrastructure which would be sourced from a mixture of public, not borrowed, private and European investment sources. This stimulus, if implemented, would help with job creation domestically and thereby boost Government revenue to avoid further cuts to social welfare, public spending and the income of the lower paid. The important point for the trade union movement is that this is a domestic political decision which our Government in the South is following very tightly, and our Government believes that a low tax economy is good for investors, multi-national corporations and high income households. So we have to oppose this as we know it is detrimental to those who are dependent on the State and for those who have no choice in that matter but to only be able to live and be cared for by the State. We had examples in the health service in the South now of absolutely crazy situations where patients are being told and their relatives have been told that services that they have for supervision and surveillance, for example in the intellectual disability services will be removed entirely at night. So, for twelve hours you will have people with intellectual disabilities not supervised, not monitored and the proposal from employers is they put in motion sensor techniques, masts and cameras in order to be sure that they are not sued when the person falls or some detrimental effect happens because those that are so vulnerable who need supervision because of these austerity of these austerity measures and because of the absolute focus on cutting public services. That is the result – that is the social consequence of such a policy.

Many of these policies, colleagues, we know about. We know about unemployment, we know about the underinvestment in mental health services but the real results cannot be changed unless we all club together as Maria said in proposing the motion and work to do more than just try and read and understand and make the case individually. We have to do this together and as a Congress of Trade Unions we can do it and we must do it, because the decision is the difference between promoting an economy and promoting society that we would all be proud to live in. Go raibh mile math agat.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any speakers to the motion? Ok. We will move on then to Motion 22 standing in the name of MANDATE 'Decent Work, Decent Contracts and a Living Wage'. Sorry, before you do that, I will take a vote.

Can I ask you to indicate acceptance of Motion No. 18, those in favour – carried.

Motion 19 – carried.

Motion 20 – carried.

Motion 21 – carried.

Thank you.

Gerry Light, MANDATE

Gerry Light, MANDATE trade union. President, delegates, it gives me particular satisfaction on behalf of MANDATE to move and seek your support for Motion 22. As you can clearly see its subject matter reflects the main theme of this conference which is the promotion of the basic human right of having a reasonable chance of getting and sustaining decent work in order to properly participate in this society in which one lives. Through addressing the many complex issues that face us in these challenging times, it is easy to lose sight of some of the basic fundamentals and aspirations which have underpinned and driven the evolution of the trade union movement. One of the simplest which has served us well over time is the demand for a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. Unfortunately, it is not an overstatement to say that

certain realities of the modern workplace would find parallels with the Dublin labour market of 1913. The opportunity to exploit workers was widely availed of by unscrupulous employers largely because of excessive unemployment and associated social deprivation. Hiring fairs were the norm with no guarantee of employment from one day to the next. When work was secured there was no assurance that earnings would be maintained. Employer manipulation of working hours was used as an effective control mechanism leading to unhealthy levels of compliance and subservience. Workers routinely faced bosses who were determined by whatever means to reduce terms and conditions to the lowest possible level. It wasn't today or yesterday that the desire for a race to the bottom was created. Most of these challenges are not only familiar in an historical context but regrettably there are as real today as they were then for many current Irish workers, particularly those employed in the services sector. This type of casualisation of the workplace and the consequential epidemic of precarious working that it breeds is one of the biggest if not the biggest threat facing our movement into the foreseeable future. No longer is this threat confined to the retail or indeed private sector, for in recent times we have witnessed this creeping corrosive influence enter into areas of the public sector as well. We must respond in a structured and resourceful way which is commensurate with the challenge. If we do not then we run the danger of allowing the persistent nature and consequential normalisation of this new working environment, damage our credibility and more importantly our ability to meaningfully influence into the future. Indeed, delegates, as I have already suggested it may challenge our very existence.

In the context of the retail sector we have discovered that some of the most profitable employers are operating structures whereby up to 90% of their workers are employed on part-time, flexible contracts. Weekly hours can be as low as five. To retain a contract a worker must in some cases make themselves available over an equivalent number of days from 7am to 11pm, which invariably includes Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. In fact, the spread in some cases is now over 365 days a year. Now that we are thrust back into a model of free collective bargaining, we in MANDATE insist that every agreement entered into must contain provisions whereby decent weekly earning thresholds are not only created but sustained and protected. Furthermore, we insist these hours are worked over patterns that have a true regard for individual workers' work-life balance needs. Sadly, this precarious working environment is challenged in any meaningful way by an Irish Government whose current job creation policy appears to be singularly focussed on shifting numbers from the unemployed to the employed through the provision of jobs and labour market initiatives that have little or no regard for the notion of quality or long-term security, rather the emphasis is solely on the numbers game.

Our political leaders also fail to grasp that the unprecedented growth in precarious work, coupled with their stark austerity policies which have been prevalent since the start of the current recession fundamentally undermines any chance for real economic recovery. It is simple and they don't get it. The many of thousands of workers and their families so affected are cruelly denied the opportunity to participate in and contribute to any meaningful domestic economic recovery. Ironically, it took the IMF in their latest review of the economy to point out that if the vast amount of part-time workers who are involuntary compelled to work reduced hours were factored in, it would push the unemployment figures to effectively double the headline rate. At MANDATE we are fighting back. Earlier this year we commissioned this report called 'Decent Work – the Impact of the Recession on Low-Paid Workers', and by the way it is freely available and you can also access it through our website; www.mandate.ie This was a deliberate effort to highlight the issue of precarious working and place it on a stage where it commands the attention of those of us who should care. However, a report does more in that it proposes credible policy solutions that in our view must be central to any uniformed approach by the union movement. Therefore, delegates, as our motion suggests, we need to move the fight against precarious working practices on and to a bigger platform.

A coordinated movement wide approach must be implemented immediately and resourced with sufficient capacity to ensure that we bring an end to these deplorable practices which were as unacceptable in 1913 as they are today. If ever the well-worn slogan – ‘an injury to one is an injury to all’ meant anything, we must ensure that in this particular circumstance our combined actions speak louder than the words.

And, finally delegates, I would say to you – an effective kick-start in the fight back in the battle against precarious working would be active support of the MANDATE Fair Shop initiative which we heavily promoted at this conference. We have had a very fine debate about the need for collective bargaining but as trade unionists we can’t argue on the one hand for the desperate need of collective bargaining to be enshrined in our law whilst on the other hand as consumers we chose to ignore employers who do collectively bargain with the union. So, breed life into the Fair Shop logo, spend your money where workers count. Thanks delegates.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Are you seconding the motion?

Gerry Caughwell, TUI

Gerry Caughwell, TUI, I will second the motion. It might be a bit strange somebody for the Teachers’ Union of Ireland coming up here to talk on this particular subject but the cancer that exists in our society today with respect to decent work crosses all boundaries. It is hard to explain that I stand here today before my colleagues to say that in one of our esteemed Institutes of Technology, we have variable hours’ contracts leading to zero hours for lecturers in an Institute of Technology. It is hard to explain coming from a teaching profession that I have colleagues working in Dublin taking €900 a month net pay to live on. It is hard to explain to colleagues here that I have colleagues in the teaching profession who are depending on their parents to keep them in food for a month while they try to build hours towards a professional career. The type of thing that is going on with respect to contracts of employment, contracts of indefinite duration, fixed-term contracts – the exploitation of workers crosses all boundaries. You have teachers and lecturers being asked would they give a dig-out – I know you are looking for a few hours for next year but is there any chance you would give me a bit of a dig-out here and assist me because I need something done. Now colleagues a dig-out lasts for a week. At the outset a dig-out lasts for a month but if a dig-out goes on for two, three and four years it is exploitation and gross exploitation and it is something we need to stop. We have a practice beginning to develop in teaching where people are being employed on specialisms. We want a teacher of English so we employ you to teach English for five hours a week and that is all you have got. Incidentally you have got to teach one hour a day, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, so now you are employed every day of the week, you are not even entitled to welfare. That has to stop. We spoke a lot here yesterday about solidarity and the time has come for solidarity on contracts of employment and the right to decent work and fair wages right across all sectors. And we really have to learn as a trade union movement to stand four square together on this. I agree with the previous speaker on this – we have to start spending our money where people respect our traditions, respect our way of doing business. Colleagues, I ask you to support the motion. I am sorry for taking up so much time in seconding it. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Gerry.

Gabriel Carton, UNISON

President, delegates, Gabriel Carton, UNISON supporting Motion 22 and speaking on the issue of the living wage. In Ireland North and South we all know that inward poverty and the

gap between the rich and poor continues to grow. This is having a devastating impact on education, health, quality of life and child poverty levels are frightening. High cost of living and stagnant wages have hit those on the lowest wages the hardest. Poverty and pay coupled with high prices mean daily misery for many, many workers and their families. Many struggle to afford even the basics, having to choose between heating and eating while pay for many of those at the top are spiralling upwards. The minimum wage is an important floor but it sadly not high enough to address these issues and give workers a decent standard of living. This is why we are calling for the minimum wage in both jurisdictions to be raised in stages towards a living wage. The living wage is the minimum that workers need in order to provide themselves and their families with the essentials for life. Austerity for low-paid workers is also self-defeating. Boosting incomes for low-paid workers, many of whom are more likely to spend their money in local shops and businesses provide much needed fuel for our struggling economy. Implementing a living wage would also help cut the benefits bill. It is estimated that the UK Government pays between six and seven billion a year for inward benefits to support workers paid below the living wage. It is time for the Irish and UK Governments to take a step towards equality and fairness and make the living wage the lowest wage. Workers North and South should not be expected to work for wages which condemn them and their families to a life of poverty. We must continue to campaign for decent work, decent contracts and against a scandal of low-pay in both the private and public sectors. The campaign for a living wage is one tool in this struggle. Please support the motion.

Cormac O'Dailaigh, CWU

Cormac O'Dailaigh, CWU strongly supporting Motion 22 from the MANDATE trade union. Colleagues, I do worry when I see words becoming the norm like precarious workers. When I was a young fellow, precarious worker was a person who was a lion tamer, he may have been a TV licence inspector in Ballymun, he might have been a football manager or he might even have been a centre half for UCD. When in actual fact now everybody has become a precarious worker and it is one of these new words that really suits employers. It is very unfair, I have a nephew who is a trainee manager in one of the top hotels in Dublin. It takes in about in about 800 trainee managers and it is a way of exploiting people – oh you are a trainee manger, don't rock the boat. He could be due to be working 8 to 4 any day and sometimes he comes home at 10pm that night. I say to him, that was a nice few hours for you. Oh, no he said, they bank the hours for me. Now he doesn't know whether he is ever going to get them. When in reality what is happening is he can't say I don't want to do that because he will be shown the door. And that is what so many people face. We have workers in the telecommunications and postal sectors for example in City Post in Dublin who are told to report to work at 7 in the morning. They might have work for them, they might not. That is not acceptable. There is a whole pool of people here and MANDATE represents many of them but there is also an awful lot more of them who aren't in any union. We keep referring back to 1913, they are very like the people in 1913 who went down to the docks hoping to get picked for work. That is really where these people are at. They are people who are being totally exploited and there is a chance for the trade union movement now to go in and try and organise these people because the only way we can stop them being exploited is by getting them into unions. If an employer has a pool of worker from which he can choose, let us have a pool of workers that we can organise and get recognition for. That is the only way we can do it. There are a few other words – that bloody word flexibility – all flexibility means is that an employer can do what he likes with you when he wants to do it. To me flexibility, I mean I remember going down to Ranelagh a while ago to a yoga class and your man said to me, I said I am interested in doing yoga and he said, how flexible are you? I told him I couldn't do Tuesdays. I am sorry for making a kind of a joke of it because it is such a serious matter and I think in some ways it is the entire future of the trade union movement that we get in on the ground representing people who are going to be exploited. Now I could go on about

JobBridge where you get exploited where you can progress to get exploited more but I won't, but what I will say is that this motion gives us the chance to start for a decent job and imagine what we are considering a decent job now – one where you might know what hours you are going to work and what pay you are going to get. Colleague, support the motion strongly, thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Any other speakers? Ok. We will move to Motion 23 JobBridge, CWU.

Fionnuala Ni Bhrógáin, CWU

Good afternoon President, delegates, I didn't prepare any jokes like my colleague from the CWU so you will have to bear with me. Fionnuala Ni Bhrógáin, CWU proposing Motion 23. Internships are nothing new. For years internship programmes have run successfully in many sectors. Internships in professions such as architecture, accounting provided valuable on the job training with real advancement opportunities. However, JobBridge as it currently exists represents a shift away from this model. We have all read the stories of internships being offered stacking shelves in warehouses, picking vegetables or serving tables. Apprenticeships too have operated successfully for many years. People entering or re-entering the workforce were provided with genuine structured training and qualifications. Apprenticeships were paid by their employer and would have had a reasonable expectation of work at the end of the placement. The recent Indecon report seems to support the idea that JobBridge is helping the unemployed find work that was not previously available. However, a closer look at the figures tells a different story. Significantly the number of interns who eventually progress to employment with their host organisation was 28.6%. This tallies very nicely with the 29% of employers who said that they would be fairly or highly likely to have offered paid employment in the absence of JobBridge. Even post-placement – the monitoring of placements – is highly deficient. Only 5% of placements are monitored. To put this in perspective a region may have four hundred internships in a month and only twenty of those placements are monitored. Looking again at the Indecon Report, the Department of Social Protection are keen to emphasise that of the 5% of internships that are monitored, 96% are deemed satisfactory. It is only when the monitoring practice is examined that you realise the criteria being used to determine satisfaction are so indistinct so as to make it very difficult to imagine what a host organisation must do to not meet the standard. It also cannot be ignored that 3% of employers admitted to using the scheme to displace existing employment. This amounts to just over 200 companies who admitted to abusing the scheme and yet to date only 15 companies have been disqualified from using the programme and that is only the 3% who brazenly admit the abuse. When you consider that there are absolutely no sanctions for employers and their identity is being protected by the Freedom of Information Act it should come as no surprise that some would take advantage. Of particular concern is that the scheme is based on a self-declaration model where issues are addressed only when a complaint is made. No pro-active checks are made into possible displacement or previous redundancies other than a declaration by the employer that this is not the case. In this self-declaration scenario the only two parties likely to make a complaint are the employer who would have no reason to make a complaint about their own action or the intern who is unlikely to be aware of any displacement and very unlikely to make a complaint that could lead to them losing their placement. There are no practices in place for any complaints by third parties such as trade unions. Taken together, the complete lack of pre-placement screening, a serious lack of oversight and no clear complaints procedures sanctions must give cause for concern.

Crucially there is no process to determine if a collective bargaining agreement is in place and no procedure for engagement with the relevant trade unions. Some employers who had recruited freely on the jobs market are choosing to fill these vacancies with interns where

placing established recruitment practice with state subsidised free labour. JobBridge interns are also highly unlikely to join a trade union. Creating a new, vulnerable section within the existing workforce in the context of Ireland's lack of collective bargaining rights will only undermine efforts in organising workers. There is no doubt that there is a dire need for decisive action on job creation, however, the inherent flaws in the current JobBridge scheme need to be addressed. I urge conference to support the motion, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Seconder?

Ethel Buckley, SIPTU

President, delegates, Ethel Buckley, SIPTU seconding the Communication Workers' Union motion on JobBridge. I am very happy to be invited to second this important motion. Delegates, we know as parents, sisters, brothers as colleagues, as comrades that young people today are facing more insecure futures, more vulnerable futures than in the past few generations of workers that have gone before us. Nearly one in three people under the age of 25 is jobless. Those that do have a job are significantly more likely to work in low-paid, part-time, non-union precarious work. Many of the young people are being forced against their will to emigrate, to leave this country to find work abroad. Mine union recently conducted an on-line survey of young workers and that showed that 94% of people under 35 do not want to emigrate, so this idea that emigration is a lifestyle choice was completely defunct by the results of that survey. The other thing that that survey showed up and that is very depressing really when you think about it, is the majority of young workers felt that they don't expect in their lifetime to secure employment that is as well-paid or as secure as their parents. That is a bit of a frightening finding I think. So youth joblessness and precarious working are the scourge of our time and we in the trade union movement have a responsibility both to campaign for jobs and to organise and mobilise young workers to make sure that those jobs are decent jobs. We must do this delegates because as Fionnuala said, unscrupulous employers are using the recession and they are using the dole queues to undermine the terms and conditions that workers organised in their unions struggled for decades to achieve. That is all under threat and what we cannot do delegates is to allow JobBridge or unpaid internship to become the enabling mechanism for a mantra that says that any job is better than no job. Delegates, yesterday Stevie Fitzpatrick from the CWU reminded us that this is our watch and what we can't allow to happen on our watch is that a whole generation of workers is lost to joblessness and precarious lives. I urge you to support this motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Speakers to this motion?

Andrew Phelan, ASTI

Comrades, Andrew Phelan, ASTI. Again I agree with the motion and am speaking in support of it. Couple of things just – Conference directs the incoming Executive Council to express its genuine concern over Government's JobBridge Scheme. What does that mean? Does it mean that we go into a room and say we don't like this and they say well tough and we walk out of the room? Is that our job done? I am being serious. I mean we are talking about action, taking action, that is what a union is supposed to do to defend its workers. Now, I am wondering is there a reason why we just can't walk into a room and say, sorry, JobBridge Scheme is just not happening and that if anybody who is on the JobBridge Scheme, forced slave labour comes into our workplace, we will down our tools and we will walk out. Is there a reason that can't happen? Is it legislation that was passed, is that what we are worried about, that the right wing Government has passed legislation? Is that the reason we can't do that? Well I don't think Rosa Parks was too concerned about laws when she decided to stand up for

her rights in the US. There are certain laws that deserved to be broken and this is a battle and it is not going to be easy. There is no point in lying and say, well you know, members mightn't be up for that you know, this is going to be tough etc. Of course it is going to be tough. It is a war against us. I am at home struggling to pay my bills and I get sick to my stomach every time an envelope comes in with a window in the front of it. This is a war. It is a battle against us. Now we have property taxes, we have water charges and everything else being forced upon us. Sorry, Patricia, I can't agree with you when you are talking about the far left condemning the trade union movement. They are not condemning the trade union movement, they are certainly not condemning me or anybody else in the workplaces. They are condemning the leadership of that movement for lack of taking action. That is what they are condemning. I will finish on this. I was sitting up there and it is my first conference. I was really looking forward to coming here and saying this is going to be great, we are going to get stuck in. And I am listening to words and most of it I agree with but it is all words, and words and words and unless we actually stand by our morals and take action on it. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Andrew. Any other speakers to this motion? Move to Motion 24, Youth Unemployment, GSU.

Sean Mackell, GSU

President, colleagues, Sean Mackell, Guinness Staff Union to move Motion 24 on Youth Unemployment. One of the biggest scandals in the past few years and believe me there has been many scandals but one of the biggest has been the way that young people have been adversely affected by unemployment. In many regards, the appalling impact on young people has been hidden because of factors such as immigration, parental support and the natural positivity of young people. However, the figures tell an awful story. 45% of young people in the Republic of Ireland who sign on the dole have now being doing it for a year or more – 45%. At the end of April, 2013 there were almost 80,000 young people signing on in the Republic, over 35,000 of those have been signing on for more than a year. Indeed, 9,000 had been on the dole for more than three years. In Northern Ireland the youth unemployment rate is almost one in four. In fact, the Nevin Institute estimated that the cost of youth unemployment in Northern Ireland alone could be in the region of 300,000. These figures incidentally are in addition to the thousands who have fled this country to find work in the far reaches of the world. The last time there was an outpouring of Irish people on a similar scale was during the famine. And, for years to come historians will look back at this current period and probably christen it the great wave of emigration. We are losing our brightest and our best and if we do nothing in our society and our ability to grow our economy North and South will be forever damaged. Like the last speaker, I think it is time for action as well. In the short-term we need a youth guarantee. We don't need to talk about it, indeed it has become a buzz word amongst some Irish politicians and in the European Union. Congress has played a good role in pressing for the youth guarantee which, as many of you know, is a scheme to ensure that young people on the live register for four months or more would have an opportunity of employment, education or training. Peter Matjasic, President of the European Youth Forum, addressing a conference in Dublin recently said; implementing tailor made employment schemes for young people and investing in youth work and youth organisations may not be cheap but youth unemployment is much more costly. If we don't take effective action now, we will bankrupt Europe's future. The National Youth Council of Ireland points out that Ireland has the second highest youth unemployment rate in Western Europe. The President of the Union of Students of Ireland, John Logue has said that it is time for Government to make good on their promises and we shall support him on that as well. We have been active on the topic of the youth guarantee and we will play an important role if it is implemented. And, let's not hang around, let's keep up the pressure on Government to make

sure that this happens. It is time that the white heads of Congress, including me, give a helping hand to the future leaders of our movement. Please support the motion, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Is there a seconder for the motion? Formally seconded. Speaking to the motion.

Stephen Harvey, NISPA

Conference, President, brothers and sisters, Steven Harvey, NIPSA and Congress Youth. Conference, I work for the Northern Ireland Security Agency and I see a number of people signing on under 25 on a frequent basis and it never fails to astound me. It is time for us as a movement to ask a question that successive Governments have asked and failed to answer – why? Why are young people not getting jobs? Why are they leaving secondary education and why are they not pursuing other forms of further education? Is it because they are lazy, unmotivated, stupid even like the Daily Mail would have you believe? I don't believe it and I don't think you believe it either. Is it because when they get a job they can't hold it down? When they enrol in a course they can't complete it? It's wrong again, and perhaps, just perhaps, it's because our politicians are content to allow a huge segment of our society to become detached from the workforce. They talk the talk about tackling the issue of youth unemployment, they never truly address it. They will happily appease us and start a youth guarantee scheme but they will only invest a fraction of the money needed to run it successfully. What message is that sending to our youth? We care about you but just not that much. Without a significant programme of investment in job creation and encouraging young people to pursue further education will only intensify. The Deputy First Minister said yesterday that our young people are great. I am judging by the applause he got from the floor that you agree. But without the opportunities to showcase their ability how will the Daily Mail readers change their minds. Without this investment our young people will just be used as another form of cheap labour by unscrupulous employers, happy to treat them as adults on the shop floor and kids in their pay packet. I am sorry, that is not on. It is a sad statement of fact that when you leave school at 16, leave full-time education and work a forty hour week and still get paid less than £150 for it. Now, I know it is about £97 more than what Ian Duncan Smith needs but it is still not a living wage in my opinion. Let us not make the mistake of just looking at this as a social issue. Let's be a wee bit selfish about it and look at ourselves. We have a big stake from an organisational viewpoint. If this problem intensifies our movement is destined to deplete. If they are not working they are not joining unions, it is as simple as that. I know UNITE have a community section now but basically if they are not working they are not going to be our members and in ten years' time we will have an abundant Retired Members Committee and an empty Youth Committee because I am not getting any younger to be honest.

So, Conference, where do I go from here? Is there a way back? There is about 25% of our young people out of work, out of education, about 155,000 odd in voluntary part-time employment and that is a key word there 'in voluntary'. Is there a way back – yes there is. As the President said, this is the way, we can't just moan about it we must do something. We as a recognised voice of the Irish trade union movement must do as we done in the past, lobby TDs, lobby MLAs, lobby MPs, pressurise our respective Governments to get our young people three vital things; a job they are well trained for, a wage they can live on and a future they deserve. We made a vain attempt to try and stick with the theme of the conference and I can slim it down to two – Decent Work, Better Future'. Support the motion.

Blaine Kilgannon, UNITE

President, delegates, Conference Blain Kilgannon, UNITE speaking in favour of Motion 24, Youth Unemployment put forward by our colleagues in the Guinness Staff Union. Youth unemployment – there is not one person here today that hasn't been left frustrated or

discussed by this issue. Youth unemployment was a recurrent issue at yesterday's conference and it was mentioned by all the guest speakers, our President, General Secretary and comrades who took to this rostrum. It was also mentioned by the Taoiseach yesterday because he was addressing the European Parliament at Ireland's presidency of the European Council. He described youth unemployment across Europe as an abomination and Angela Merkel described it as Europe's biggest problem. I have to say it is an abomination and it is Europe's biggest problem and it has been for too long. Comrades, the figures speak for themselves. Across the EU27, 5.6 million under the age of 25 are without jobs. Northern Ireland youth unemployment has a rate of 24%, with the Republic around 30%, and one of the worst in Europe behind Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece with around 62.5%. Also yesterday the EU budget was released and after all the back patting has been done and dusted. The EU had put funds aside to the tune of €6 billion to combat youth unemployment across the continent with a further €2 billion being made available down the line. So €8 billion to date to deal with the youth unemployment across Europe. Martin Shultz, the President of the European Parliament said that these funds are allocated to combat youth unemployment. These €6 billion, we should be clear on this, is a drop in the bucket. Some of the economists view that the actual cost of this will be twenty times this at around €119 billion. I am just reminding you comrades that the EU spent nearly €700 billion on a banking rescue system, the people that have put us in this position of economic downturn. And, with no questions asked and after much deliberation and hesitation only €6 billion to combat youth unemployment across the continent. Now Mr Kenny and Ms Merkel – that is an abomination.

On this island in the North and in the Republic another black hole has been created as thousands of our well-educated and key skilled young people are emigrating, contribute to another country's economy and infrastructure, leaving behind devastated families and decimated communities. Colleagues, this is nothing new. It is only a matter of history repeating itself and it seems to happen in every other generation. My own parents left this island – my father from Swinford, Co Mayo along with the rest of his sibling to work in construction in London and so did my mother from Dungannon, Co Tyrone as did my grandfather before that. I remember asking my dad why him, my uncles and my aunties left home at seventeen years of age to go to London. He said, son there was nothing, we had nothing, you had to go where the work is. That Mr Kenny is now an abomination. High youth unemployment on this island now and in the past has created a ripple effect through society which in turn led to more worrying issues such as the potential green grounds for parliamentary recruitment, increase in crime particularly gangland crime and drugs and theft, depression, mental illness, with our young people trying desperately to try and survive and create a life for themselves.

Another element which filters, sorry Eugene, anyway there is huge youth unemployment in Ireland comrades. The Executive Committee needs to address all the issues and campaign and support an organising action plan on how youth unemployment can be tackled, whether that be through legislation or laws, the youth guarantee, exploring and adopting a model that has been successfully used in other EU countries with low unemployment rates as well as continued investment in education, apprenticeships and infrastructure to create the domestic jobs for our young people on the this island. Enough is enough and it is time for a change. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Blaine. No other speakers we will move to Motion 25, Organising & Recruitment, CWU UK.

Vivienne Holding, CWU UK

Vivienne Holding, CWU UK. I know you have probably heard most of what I am going to say, but here goes. At the ICTU Women's Seminar on International Women's Day, the question was raised as to why the room was so full of older people. Where are the youth among us. If you

look around you sure you will find that there is not youth anywhere. A majority of young people work now in call-centres or are unemployed or as has already been said they end up migrating to other countries. As the job market is getting bleaker and unemployment is higher, unscrupulous employers take advantage of this to drive down conditions saying such things as, well be very grateful that you have a job. They make sure that the young people don't have any access to anything that might alert them to the fact that they do have rights. So many believe and so many then end up leaving because there is nothing they can do. Some employers won't even have a mention of unions. They hope the employees will do as they are told and get on with the job. The use employers' forums as internal mini unions which lack any real power to change anything but aim just to distract until the worker gets tired of trying to change things. The modern day minimum wage employers discourage trade unions actively as much as they can get away with. They break the law knowing it is unlikely the young person will know or do anything about it.

Colleague, we need to make trade unions relevant. We need to make it seen by young people and show them that we can make a difference in their daily lives and that we are relevant to them. We need to run campaigns to reach the youth of today and to gain union recognition in as many workplaces as possible. Also, I am a member of the Northern Ireland Women's Committee and just as Sally Anne has an insightful youth project, a few years ago we made up a programme called LIFT and it is basically along the same lines but the problem was of funding. We couldn't get the funding to go anywhere so with hopefully the help of the ICTU and the unions we could maybe get ahead with. But things like this and with the help of the ETUG, other projects getting into school, we bring along from the young and they will know unions and they will know what it is they are entitled. So we should encourage our workers to think of trade unions when they see that they can make a change in their own conditions. This is something we must do. We have to fight for workers' rights but also as a trade union that doesn't do anything, we are not going to survive.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Seconders?

Flora Alfante, UNISON

President, delegates, good afternoon, Flora Alfante from UNISON supporting the Motion 25, and speaking on the issue of organising and recruiting migrant workers and young people. In 2007, Robbie McVeigh, published an excellent report on trade union, migrant workers and their families for NIC ICTU. In the report he concluded that trade unions in Northern Ireland have both the duty and the capacity to organise and represent migrant workers. I repeat, trade unions in Northern Ireland have both the duty and the capacity to organise and represent migrant workers. How many unions have a proportion of migrant workers as members that reflect the make-up of migrant workers in their sector? How many? Many branches and undoubtedly unions rely on the usual – they are more than welcome to get involved – but they don't seem to want us. But, the usual way of doing things will be unlikely to shake existing patterns and to attract people who live different realities and face multi-discrimination and disadvantages. In UNISON we have a wide membership amongst Pilipino, Indian and Polish migrant workers. We have a strong migrant workers network with regular communication and activities. We have set up immigration advice clinics, a regional group deciding on action and campaigns. We also have English support classes with a crèche provided. We are proud of our work and proud of the fact that the migrant workers in the sectors that we represent are well unionised. But being proud of what we have achieved doesn't take away from how much further we need to go to ensure that migrant workers are included within the structures of the union. We need to go from representing migrant workers to being representative of our migrant workers membership. So, delegates I am challenging

you to go back to all your branches and start organising and including young people and migrant workers. Thank you. Please support this motion.

Tara Keane, MANDATE

President and delegates, Tara Keane from MANDATE speaking in support of this motion. I come to you today to support this motion not only as a representative of MANDATE but as a young worker who for five years was employed in the retail sector. While I was in that employment I was typical of the young workers of today. I tried to retail too as an organiser. Let's talk about that for karma. I had absolutely no interest in trade unions. I was not a member and I did not see who they were relevant to my everyday life. It was not until the store I worked in shut and I found myself with no choice but to occupy the building in order to get the wages that I was owed and I realised two things, and I realised them very quickly. Trade unions were most definitely relevant in my everyday life and I most definitely needed to be a member of one. Fortunately, or unfortunately, not every young worker in this country will be put in similar circumstances. They will not be forced into the union movement in the same manner that I was so this leaves us with the question which has been much debated among delegates here. How do we convince this generation to join us? A generation which is completely disillusioned with everything at the moment. A generation which feels that they are not being heard or listened to. I truly believe that this motion begins to answer some of those questions. This motion brings us back to absolutely basics. Two basic principles of being a member of a trade union – engagement and empowerment. It calls on us not to be a voice for young people but to help them develop their own. Not to fix every single problem they encounter in their workplace but provide them with the tools to do it themselves and I believe, delegates, that in supporting this motion we are not supporting the recruitment of thousands of members. We are supporting development of thousands of future activists and we are supporting the future of this movement North and South. Thank you very much.

Alison Millar, NIPSA

President, delegates, Alison Millar NIPSA to support Motion No. 25. Conference, the decline in union membership is a serious issue for this movement to tackle not just for our survival and relevance in the 21st century but to ensure in the time of austerity that workers are protected from unscrupulous employers who will seek to attack and reduce terms and conditions of employment across all sectors. In particular, conference must address why young people are currently not joining trade unions and seek to correct this by making trade unions relevant to young workers. However, we should not just focus on the young. There are many middle aged and more mature workers who have not joined a trade union and we must also address this issue. Yesterday some delegates cheered when we announced that female membership among Congress was 52%. Let's not, Conference, congratulate ourselves on the loss of over 9,000 members irrespective of whether they are men, women, gay, lesbian, straight or from different race or from any other group. This is a loss to our movement and in most cases a loss of a job to a worker. At a time of high unemployment it can become easy to use this as a reason or an excuse for decreasing membership numbers. However, the facts do not bear this out. In some areas even where there is no decline in the workforce there can be a decline in union density and we must examine why this is. There are many reasons for this including the focus has moved away as we know from the collective to the individual with most density groups more likely to use legislative and traditional routes to solve employment problems rather than participate in trade unions and pursue collective solutions. Changes to working practices including privatisation, contracting out, casualisation and globalisation of the workforce have all impacted negatively on trade union density, union coverage and union recognition. Conference, it is therefore vital that we use the organising agenda to tackle this very real problem and make trade unions relevant to all workers in the 21st century. It is true that unions must seek to link with members using many different methods. Time after time research demonstrates that the most effective way is to recruit members into a trade union is

not by leafleting them, not by sending them a message on Facebook or Twitter but direct engagement, and I think that many of us who are true our values believe that we have lost our way on this.

On the specific issue of young people, Trademark have carried out a study. In that study it emerged that rates of unionisation were very much lower amongst young workers as well as new workplaces. In my own union, NIPSA, our Youth Committee in conjunction with the organisers and Trademark have successfully increased our membership of young people by 23%. The research also highlighted that the if workers did not join a trade union in the first five years of entering the labour market irrespective of their age they were unlikely to join.

As the motion highlights, there are many occasions when there is no clear remit of which union should organise in a particular sector or workplace. Congress, we need to be clear if all we are going to do is seek to recruit or poach from our sister unions, then we will fail. Conference, support this motion and ensure that we can take this forward and irrespective of young, old, middle-aged is that we get as many people into this movement as we possibly can. Conference, support the motion.

Theresa Walsh, INTO

Hi everyone, my name is Theresa Walsh and I am a member of the INTO. I am also Vice-Chair of the ICTU Youth Committee and I feel that it is vitally important that young people get involved in their union. We are the future of the unions in Ireland. We are the future of the INTO, so it is vitally important that young people do get involved. As a primary school teacher I can't let anybody leave without giving you some homework as such! To go back to your union and organise and get young people involved in their union. A lot of primary school teachers and secondary school teachers and young people alike are coming out of college without any prospect of employment, so it is vitally important that we do get involved. Thank you very much.

Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council

Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council to support the motion as well. Just a couple of points that struck me actually for the summer work we have done with the young people on our Trades Council and also actually in my own union, NIPSA in terms of its Youth Committee, one of the things is that always strikes me when the do the surveys was the biggest reason they don't join a union is because no one has asked them. And there is an issue there about us going out there and making sure that we actually explain to people what unions are about and we have a responsibility, and there is a responsibility on us in schools to educate our young people about what a trade union is about and how that can benefit them in a workplace over the years. We are doing a wee bit of work here in the North with both the teacher unions and the unions representing the non-teaching staff to work together to see if there is something we can do to put together to actually do that piece of work. What I would share with you is two things – one is that there are some people involved in our Trades Councils belong to some unions and they can't actually explain to their work colleagues that they are in a union because they would be sacked and that is a reality. And we should be doing something to shame those employers who actually take that stance against young workers who want to join or are trying to join unions, so we should be doing something there. We had a four day programme of events to do with G8 there a few weeks back and we organised a programme of evens for four days and we had speeches, comedy nights, singing, political debates, we had a whole range of activities for four days. Although it was the Belfast Trades Council was involved, the vast majority of that work was done by our young people who are on our Trades Council, the young people in ICTU Youth and some young people in NIPSA Youth as well. The vast majority of that work, and that went from web design to putting the programme together, to publicising the thing, to call an early morning 7am to hand

things out in Belfast city centre, to going out to the workplaces after work and shopping centres, all of that work was done by young people. So, I found their enthusiasm inspirational. In my view, I think that this union movement has a long way to go because those young people are actually showing us how we should do it. Please support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Paddy. No other speakers. I am going to put the motions to you.

Motion 22, those in favour – carried.

Motion 23, those in favour – carried.

Motion 24, those in favour – carried.

Motion 25, those in favour – carried.

Thanks very much. Can I just indicate that I intend proceeding with the agenda and get through as much as it as we can today and also to remind you that seminal work on the Lock-Out by Padraig Yeates is available up in the café area where the coffee and tea is being served. The book is €20 or £17, depending on what currency you have with you.

And, also this key hasn't yet been recovered.

Can we now move on to Motion No. 26, Pensions, standing in the name of the Executive Council being proposed by Jimmy Kelly. Is Shay Cody in the hall?

Jimmy Kelly, UNITE

Conference, Jimmy Kelly, UNITE moving Motion 26 in the name of the far left or sorry the Executive Council. Conference, the Executive is calling for action on pensions. One of the most important issues facing society today is the uncertainty over people's retirement income. Nowhere can we see such a massive division in society that in the world of pensions between those at the top and the rest of us. It is absolutely unbelievable and an example, you can all think of examples yourselves, but one example is those that led the Government that brought the Republic into such a crisis – the Bertie Ahernes, the Brian Cowans, the Dermot Aherns, the Noel Dempseys, all on pensions currently of €3,500 per week after pocketing lump sums of a quarter of a million euro. So, that is the reward for doing what they did.

Defined Benefits Schemes are being closed to new employees when they are not being wound up entirely and at our own UNITE Conference last week we had an emergency motion in defence of our members in Permanent TSB. Three Defined Benefit Schemes closed just as simple as that at the stroke of a pen from the employer. People are being forced to rely on Defined Contribution Schemes which of course puts all the risk on the employees, absolving the employers of any responsibility for pension funding. The Government itself is leading way through its cuts to the State's old age pension, insidious below the radar cuts. In the future it will be more difficult for workers to plan for let alone save for their retirement. In the future retired workers will be required to live on less. People will be denied an adequate retirement income. The trade union movement does not believe that this is inevitable. We are calling for a mandatory tripartite savings pension policy, required mandatory contributions from all employers and employees along with the State. This should be implemented through the Social Insurance System. It is about in the first instance ensuring that everyone receives an adequate pension regardless of their contributions status. This would then be supplemented with a pay related element to pension income. It would transform our current wholly inadequate system that operates today. A system which denies so many workers anything

resembling an adequate income. This system already operates throughout many European States. We must start moving towards this Social Europe model and during that transition period to that new social model, we are calling on the Government to protect Defined Benefit Schemes.

The most urgent priority is to provide pension protection as ruled by the European Court of Justice. In this case, former workers in Waterford Crystal supported by UNITE and SIPTU took the Government to court and won a fantastic victory for all workers. The Government should respond. This is a clear example of how workers are treated differently and all the debates we have had on workers' rights, this is another example of workers' rights being trampled on. In the case of the Waterford workers, they occupied the factory the same as the Visteon Plant here in Belfast. Occupation ends, Visteon workers plug in to a pension protection fund, nothing for workers in the Republic in this case Waterford workers. Even worse, when the company went insolvent – Waterford is part of Waterford Wedgewood – Wedgewood workers in Stoke in England plugged in to a pension protection fund. It is just the horror of the way ordinary workers are treated. Now, even following that victory in the European Court the Government should respond immediately and introduce the necessary legislation consistent with that court ruling. Unfortunately, recent statements indicate that they intend to long-finger this issue, potentially putting more workers' income at risk especially those who are nearing retirement age. In addition Motion 26 seeks to address the issue of the new age criteria and I know that some affiliated trade unions are urging the incoming Executive to oppose this rather than just phase it in. The problem is that it comes in as I understand it in January of 2014, so the Executive is going to have to look at how we will oppose this and deal with it as it states in the motion. As it stands now, Ireland is increasing the age faster than any other country in Europe. Many workers don't and cannot meet the full eligibility criteria due to family care and responsibility. This applies particularly obviously to women. Further discrimination against women. In the future more workers will be on contract work slipping in and out of the workforce in a way that will discriminate against them in having the sort of pension rights that they should have. We are running out of time so we must move quickly to develop a progressive and socialised pension policy so that we can lead this debate, head off those forces that want to put the entire onus of retirement incomes on the back the workers while relieving employers of any responsibility. I ask Conference to support Motion 26.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress
Shay.

Shay Cody, IMPACT

Delegates, Shay Cody speaking for the Executive Council to second the motion. I just want to focus a little bit about the change in the pension age which in the Republic of Ireland is going to be changed from the 1st January next. And most workers, citizens have no awareness of that fact. David on behalf of the Congress Executive has been engaged in increasingly vitriolic correspondence with the Department of Social Protection who have adopted the most cynical approach to this. They have changed the retirement element eligibility criteria so that the transitional pension will not become payable at all and you will then get the old age pension at the age of 66 and in due course that will increase to 67 and 68. And, as Jimmy said, that is the fastest increase in the pension eligibility age of any country in the OECD. The cynicism around this is that they are saying what will happen people whose contracts of employment require them to leave the workforce on their 65th birthday. They can sign on and draw the dole for the period between their 65th birthday and their 66th birthday, and they tell us that will bridge the gap. But of course they are changing the eligibility criteria for the dole and you will only be able to get that for nine months. You also have criteria if you are going to be drawing social protection – you have to be available for work or training or whatever which is some ask for somebody who is past their 65th birthday. This is an absolutely

cynical approach by the Department. The Executive needs the full support of the trade union movement and the wider population to challenge this particular approach by the Department. We can be purist around this and say we don't want any change in the retirement age – we can all agree on that – but actually what the Executive is saying here is that we need to make a big, big issue about the situation that workers are going to find themselves in next January which is now less than six months away. I ask for your support, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you. Speakers?

Maria Noble, UNISON

Good afternoon colleagues, Maria Noble, UNISON. The right to a decent State pension is one of the crucial things that our movement has to fight for. The UK Government's proposal for £140 per week for 2016 is already well below the current official poverty line of £178 per week now. And even now 28% of pensioners in Northern Ireland are living in poverty. Working people in this island are struggling to pay for now. We heard our colleague upstairs talking about the fear of that brown envelop dropping through the door. But 63% of people of working age are not contributing to a non-State pension, sorry dependent on the State pension. Additionally, we need to address the fact that access to the State pension is discriminatory. Given the gender pay gap women have less money to take into older age and many women are not entitled to the full pension. Disabled people are twice as likely to be unemployed as their non-disabled peers and to have shorter pension's contribution records. And, when employed tend to be low-paid. All of which has a major impact on their pension income. Disabled people are characterised as 'scroungers' and benefits designed to compensate for this disadvantage are being stolen from them through assessments that are have no basis in medical status or real capabilities, but are a cost cutting exercise. The UK Government is using a 'divide and rule' strategy preventing spouses from benefiting and living overseas and benefiting from the contributions that their spouses made – they paid for it – why can't the use it as they wish? This implies the public sector workers are sitting on fat pension rights unlike those poor bankers, politicians and business leaders who have failed their countries and communities. For those of us where were fortunate enough to be in a work pension scheme, we still find embedded discrimination. I will give you a scenario. If any of you male comrades took one look at me as I am standing here, fell instantly in love, ran to the front, threw yourself down on knee – those of you who have got flexible parts – and asked me to marry you, I said yes and we dash off and got married. If, unfortunately, I died the next week my husband would have access to a proportion of my pension contributions for the full range of my working life. Unfortunately, my female partner of twenty-seven years would be restricted to benefits accrued since 2005, which in our case would mean twenty-five years' worth of contributions lost to us. We talk about a living wage for all, achieving a living pension for all must be one of the battles we win. Please support the motion.

Alison Millar, NIPSA

President, delegates, Alison Millar on behalf of NIPSA to oppose Motion 26. Conference, the issue of pensions is, as you know, a major one for all workers to ensure that as far as reasonably possible in our old age we will have enough money to live on. However, a tax by the current Governments are seeking to make workers' pay more, get less and work longer. Conference, the issue that my union has with this motion is the acceptance of sub-paragraph a) that Congress should seek changes to the eligibility criteria be phased in over a longer period of time. I understand the sentiments of this but there is an issue with this. To accept that we should just be negotiating for a longer period would effectively mean that the trade union movement accepts that workers who say are 45 or below, or is that 30, what age should work longer? In many professions it would be ridiculous to believe that workers, irrespective of their age now, would be expected to work for forty-five, fifty or even more years before they are

eligible for either a State or occupational pension. Conference, NIPSA, UNITE and PCS amongst others have signed up to the campaign '68 is too late'. Too late for our young people to be taught by teachers who are worn out after forty-five or more years teaching, too late for nurses, care-workers and doctors to be looking after the sick and elderly, too late for retail workers to stand on their feet all day or sit at a till scanner, too late for refuse collectors, administrators, in fact Conference, too late for all workers. The UK formula for this increase in State and occupational pension increases will mean that children born today will have to work until at least 77 years of age or more. While medical advances mean we are all living longer, healthy life expectancy is actually increasing much more slowly. If we were to accept this motion it will mean that the young, and we have just talked about recruiting young members into our union, and those in their 30s and 40s will be expected to work much, much longer. This is unfair and unjustified. What this conference should be united against is the increase in the State and occupational pensions for all, not some arbitrary age which will leave younger workers believing the trade union movement is not interested in protecting them and to coin a phrase, the likes of me I am all right Jack and you know the rest of that. This is not acceptable today nor tomorrow that we should seek to slip workers on what is a key issue. Conference, reject this motion. Do not let us fall into the trap of protecting a few workers to detriment of the majority. Conference, oppose the motion.

Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council

Thanks President. Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council to reluctantly oppose this motion. And I do that because I absolutely understand what the purpose of this motion is about and about doing everything possible to protect Defined Benefit Schemes and also the responsibility of the movement to engage with Government and employers. However, it is really about what it is actually saying and unlike what Shay suggested that you could take a purist point of view, it is actually a principled point of view to not only protect workers who are in this hall and the workers who are back in their workplaces but also the young workers who are coming through tomorrow and the day after. And we have to have a stance that actually isn't indicated by the agendas set by Government. I mean the issue for me in this motion is the sentence that ends before a) and b), where it says; Conference calls for the reasonable expectations of people to be recognised and the reasonable expectation of any worker is that their pension entitlements are protected, that they don't have to work longer, that they don't have to pay more and they don't get less at the end of it. That is what we should be doing as a movement and not dancing to somebody else's tune. I understand that behind the scenes you can still do something different, it is different than saying this motion is now passed and that is our position, that we think you should extend this for a longer period of time, so we accept the argument from Government. So, on that basis I think you should oppose the motion. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Ok, no other speakers. Jimmy, right to reply to the debate.

Jimmy Kelly, UNITE

Just to say Conference, that motion was discussed within the Executive Council and supported by all affiliates. There is no disagreement with what comrades are saying about the area of the change in the eligibility criteria being phased in. Of course we are against it being implemented at all. Taking into account the fact that it is going in in January, 2014, that is why the motion is framed like that, so the motion is as worded. We understand what comrades are saying. The incoming Executive will look at exactly what's been said but we are asking Conference to support this motion. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Ok Jimmy, thank you.

I am going to take a vote on this, Motion No. 26. It's recommendation is despite the misgivings, the Executive would recommend that you endorse and support this motion. Those in favour please show, those against? It is carried. Thank you.

We move to Motion 27, European Globalisation, TEEU.

David Carr, TEEU

Mr President, brothers and sisters, on behalf of the TEEU and speaking on this motion. This EU fund, it exists to assist workers who are made redundant as a result of the adverse impact of globalisation. This can include situations where factories or businesses are moved outside the EU but until last year where significant redundancies were linked directly to global economic and financial crisis. This fund was extended to those type of workers. Now, I would like to draw on my own experiences of the EGF. I had been employed first by Aer Lingus and then I was transferred to Team Aer Lingus and that was one of the first privatisations in the Republic and then moved on to FLS industries, which was a Danish cement manufacturer, very experienced in aviation matters, and then we moved to SR Technics. SR Technics closed down in April, 2009 and the first we heard of the EGF Fund was in October, 2009, six months later when the Irish Government decided to make an application on behalf of the 1,135 workers who were made redundant. Now, the thing about when you make an application for EGF is that you have two years in which to use the funds but the date starts, that two years' date starts from the date the first application is made. Now our Government at the time applied for these funds without any consultation with the workforce to decide what type of courses were needed, what type of re-training, they didn't do any of that. The application was sent back and had to be redrawn. So, it was one year from the date of the first application that the fund was actually granted to us so that meant that we had lost a year of this funding. Now what I would like to see Congress do in the case there are further redundancies, mass redundancies, is to establish a template so that they can go to Government before an application is made and in this template they would specify what type of courses, what type of retraining is needed but they should do this first with consultation with the works that are going to be affected. And in that way we would save the scenario that we were eventually faced with.

As it turned out at the time Mary Coughlan, Fianna Fáil was in power and it was her Department that made a mess of the first application but then when a new Government took over it moved from the Department of Trade, Enterprise and Employment and now moved to the Department of Education and Skills under Ruairi Quinn. Now this minister refused numerous requests to meet with a delegation of the workers and also his sidekick, Ciaran Cannon. Eventually, when we got the funds there was €11.46m allocated to us but only €4.5m of that money was spent. So that meant that nearly €7m euro went back to Europe. The other programmes that were incorporated at the time was the Dell workers and on the Dell workers they spent €13m out of a possible €22m and the funny thing about the Dell workers is that they actually campaigned under a slogan of equal rights for non-union workers, I think actually they got more rights than we did. In the case of the Waterford Crystal people, they have made the most benefit because of the €3.96m that was awarded to them, they actually spent €3.09m, so they got the best deal out of the lot. So, in moving the motion there are a number of things that I would like to see Congress taking on board and that is for the European Globalisation Management Fund, the guys that look after this now on behalf of the Department of Education & Skills, that they should actually list out the benefits, allowances, the award that workers can apply for that at the moment even though they have now set up a website, the website is very deficient on what you are actually entitled to. That could be one area in which Congress could help. So, in moving the motion I would just say, Congress please come up with a template that will apply to all workers in the future. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you David. Secunder for the motion? Formally seconded. No speakers. Ok, can I put the motion to you, Motion 27, those in favour please show, against, agreed. Thank you.

We will move to Motion 28, Casualisation, standing in the name of TUI.

John MacGabhann, TUI

John MacGabhann, Teachers' Union of Ireland. It is now commonplace and broadly accepted that the primary determinant of quality in teaching and lecturing of education rather is the quality of teaching and lecturing. That's true, there are other factors of course but they don't set aside that particular adage. Right now we have at both second and third level people who in order to access positions in teaching and lecturing are now spending an extended period of pre-service training unpaid, running to six years. That represents very significant opportunity costs, lost earnings, lost career earnings. Those people are subject increasingly to varying and stringent levels of accountability. They are required to train and retrain, as is appropriate, and they are increasingly required to register and to maintain registration which implies the highest professional standards. You would think given that the Government says that the quality of the education system is central to the effort to recover national economic sovereignty and to empower the citizenry of the country. You would think that there would be some congruence between that rhetoric and what Government then does in terms of the appointment of teachers and lecturers but there is no such congruence. There is a crisis in teaching, in lecturing also. There are several difficulties to do with short-term deficits and funding, to do with what may well be, we hope, short-term retrenchments in allocation of teachers and lecturers. All of those are major difficulties but there is an engineered, a cynically engineered, an opportunistic engineered crisis. It is engineered by fragmenting jobs into fragments of jobs into ours. Let me give a very simple illustration. A school or a college gets an allocation of a lecturer or a teacher. Management locally decides to break that job into three fragments. The teacher, who might had he or she got the full job, be in the receipt of in the region of €30,000 gross per annum will not get that. Three individuals will get €10,000 per annum and they will be kept in fixed term positions for the full period required under process of law to acquire entitlement to contracts of indefinite duration. There is no necessity for this to happen. There is no good reason in terms of curricular provision. There is no good reason in terms of the well-being of the system for this to happen. What we have is now is a group of employers who themselves did not have this rigour apply to them, applying this pernicious rigour to others. And what they are doing is they are creating or attempting to create a compliant, quiescent, fearful cadre of teachers and lecturers and it is a contradiction in terms that teachers should be, if you like, brought in to an induced state of fear. Teachers and lecturers should be challenging their students and if they are to do so they should have a personal and professional assertiveness. That is part and parcel of their DNA, part and parcel of their make-up. But they are waiting year on year at this time of year waiting for word from their line manager, will you be kept on, will you not be kept on. Let's roll the dice and see what happens. We have examples where a teacher is required let us suppose for a job in English or a lecturer is required to lecture on English literature, and three people are engaged, three are engaged, so by dint of some spurious comparison, the colour of hair, the degree of baldness, the tint of eyes, the tint of the glass in eyeglasses, people are chosen for succession in the following year and others are cast aside. This is a crisis. It is a manufactured crisis and because it is a manufactured crisis, it can be resolved. This motion which is long – I hope you have read it – it states the argument but it asks for a solution and it asks that the Congress treat this crisis as a matter of priority. I will confess that in the Teachers' Union of Ireland we were disappointed that it wasn't centralised during recent talks and negotiations. We are asking now that it be centralised, that there be a high level working group established, that there be a key demand put to Government because Government by the way

and certainly in Department of Education & Skills realises that systemic damage is now being caused by this process that preceded the crisis incidentally but has been augmented by it. We are asking for coherent, immediate and effective action to remedy a manufactured crisis and we say here shame upon those including some people who are members of our unions and of others, who are making fellow trade unionists quake in their boots lest they get less than the miserable €10,000 that they were given in year one when they proceed to year two. There are other aspects to it. This calls for action. Please support.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you John, seconder?

Declan Glynn, TUI

Good afternoon delegates, Declan Glynn, Teachers' Union of Ireland. We come supplication to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on this issue. The crisis within teaching and lecturing professions arising from the fragmentation of work is astonishing deep and grave and serious. There has been a constant augmentation in pupil and student numbers continually over many years and that is said to increase based on even a cursory analysis of demographics. However, complementing the augmentation of student numbers, there has been an unrelenting attrition in staff numbers. The Government's policy in respect to further education for example, is comprehensive, pioneering, far-thinking, it meshes with the expert report on future skills needs and we broadly support it. That's on the one hand. On the other hand 200 full teaching jobs have been lost this year from the sector expected to deliver future skills needs to our economy, 200 full-time jobs. There has been little clamour about it on any kind of widespread public basis. The next motion on our agenda is a commendable motion from our colleagues in IFUT in relation to the protection of employees' fixed term work Act of 2003. That Act had two aims arising from a European Directive. One was to bring to an end the constant re-interview of continually employed non-permanent workers. The second objective, however, was to facilitate part-time work because not everybody wants a full-time job. However, on the second matter what we have witnessed is an 'own goal' in some respects because there has been a constant degradation of work as my colleague John has said. Teachers and lecturers no longer apply for jobs. They apply for a pitiful amount, a handful amount of hours and they cannot, a great many of them – over 30% of them – one in three – cannot earn a living wage any longer in this country. In the TUI we are doing everything we can and we travel the country the country saving and protecting the jobs of our members when they are under threat but we need significant support from our colleague unions and from the ICTU, to bring as a matter of core policy to Government that we are facing an unprecedented crisis in the delivery of education arising from the breaking-up of jobs. There are multifarious consequences arising from the splitting of jobs in this manner. It means that young teachers, for example, de facto serve an informal probation. They are informally probated for four years on less than whole time hours before they gain any tenure within the system. There hasn't been a permanent whole time teaching job advertised in this country for donkey's years and this is risible because the demands on teachers in schools can no longer be met. Your children, my children lose choice. We can no longer deliver physics in many of our schools despite the urgency and necessity to do so. There are many options that have been wiped from the curriculum in our schools. So, in closing we almost beg of you to assist us on this matter and help us to bring forward our policy, bring it to fruition and bring an end to this distasteful practice. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Declan.

I call on the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee.

Jack McGinley, Chair of Standing Orders Committee

President, Delegates, Standing Orders recommend that we extend this session by fifteen minutes to take the advertised speaker as per the second report of Standing Orders. Conference also has had a request from the CWU UK to withdraw Motion 34 and we would ask conference that would be the place where we would take the Emergency Motions No 1 and 2. I move.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Are we agreed? Reluctantly, thank you.

Diarmuid de Paor, ASTI

Diarmuid de Paor, ASTI, I will be very brief. Just first of all I would like to thank the TUI, our colleagues, for bringing this motion. As John and Declan have pointed out this is a crisis in teaching. Most of the officials in our unions spend a huge percentage of our time dealing with harassed teachers desperate for a few more hours to make up a half decent salary, desperate at this time every year, desperate to know do they have a job next year. And, as they have said, this is totally unnecessary and it is wrong and it is damaging not only to those individuals but it is very damaging to our education system. And evidence of that, there has been a lot of talk about the far-left, I will quote another far-left organisation the OECD, constantly say in their reports that Ireland is way, way out of kilter with the rest of the world, the rest of the developed world in the casualisation of the teaching profession and that this will have very serious and damaging consequences for our education system. And we have to ask ourselves why is this happening. Partly it is happening because it allows managements to play one teacher off against another in terms of getting them to do all sorts of extra work. This is not done lets be fair by all school principals, some of them are very good and decent, but it allows the opportunity for the unscrupulous ones to do so. And also, I would lay the blame for an awful lot of this not even at the Department of Education, who I think are beginning to listen to us, but every attempt we make to try and form systems to deal with this, to try and form panels for teachers who have worked in different schools that they may get rights in other schools and move on, is met by an objection from our management bodies which is on the spurious ground of protecting ethos. And actually it was John MacGabhann at one meeting said to the Department, now that we have dealt with the 720 different ethos in our schools, can we move on because that is what is happening. This spurious idea that teachers can go into a school and are not in receipt of Holy Orders or degrees in theology are going to corrupt the youth of Ireland and we have to check them for four years before we can see if they are safe to teach our children. I urge you Congress to support this motion. Let our young teachers get full-time jobs and let them do what they want to do which is teach. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Diarmuid. Can I put Motion 28, those in favour please show, thank you that's carried.

I call on John Matthews from the Congress Centres to address conference and just when you are coming to the rostrum, can I point out to any delegates who may well have some luggage that they want to bring with them tomorrow, you can leave it in room 1. I am advised that it will be at your own risk. It can't be left in the Congress office, and it can't be left at the registration desk. The Palestine fringe meeting is going to be held in the Boardroom immediately we finish proceedings. John.

John Matthews, Congress Centres Network

Good afternoon, my name is John Matthews. I am acting Chair of the Congress Centres Network. This is a network of twenty-two Centres we have around the country which are mostly sponsored by you, the union, Trades Councils and they give up their time and work on a

voluntary basis to keep the Centres running. The Centres, homing into what other people were saying there earlier on, the Centres were initially started up in the mid-80s and it was a time of the high unemployment at that time, and it was mainly to be a voice for unemployed but it was mainly to get people what they were entitled to. I heard someone asking Congress to maybe sort something out about that. The Centres can get anybody, if you are entitled to anything, the Centres will get it for you. They will advise you and they will not assume that you can fill in an application form, they will help for everything there, so I had to get that in before it went out of my head. The Centres actually deal with about half a million people every year and they have over eight hundred employees which most often will be on a CE New Community Employment Scheme and they are all members of unions. Centres have moved on in a big way now. Nineteen of us have a FETAC accreditation status and we deliver a lot of training and we have this past two years done a lot of work for TU Skillnets. We are applying in our own right now for funding and ICTU has actually secured funding to train people with disabilities which will be starting now very shortly in the BMW region. Why I am here today is to highlight the Centres number one, but it is also to ask unions to use the Centres as much as they can if they need to have meetings or if they need training, if they need to rent out rooms or anything like that, the Centres are available at a much lower cost than hotels and that. The Centres do not get funding for their rent so this a way that we can fundraise to pay our rent. Some of the Centres have expanded. Now, in my own we have childcare facilities and we have a training centre itself but our aim is if we can get enough funds in we can employ people into real jobs. So we would have the continuity of staff. In fact the progression from the Centres for people that came through the Centres is about 70%, so 70% this past twenty years people have gone into jobs or back to further education. When we do training we always take somebody in to talk to the unemployed people about how important it is to be a member of a union. I think that is coinciding with ICTU. We identify the needs of people and the gaps and through ICTU now we actually sit on a lot of boards which have influence because we know what is happening on the ground, we would be very welcomed at these meetings because I think some people just don't realise what is happening.

I think that it is important that everyone knows what their Centre is, where their Centre is and what we do and we have just issued a booklet now on information on all of the Centres, what they do, where they are, so they are up on our stand up in the Minor room. Thank you very much for your time.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you John.

Conference, thank you for your forbearance in relation to the time. It has been a long day but it will ease the traffic jam tomorrow morning no doubt. We stand adjourned now until 9.30 in the morning. Thanks very much.

Thursday 4th July, 2013

Morning Session

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Conference, come to the front. Come on up. Thank you Billy.

Billy Hannigan, Chairman of Scrutineers

Morning delegates, Billy Hannigan, PSEU and Chairman of the Scrutineers. Now, what I am going to do delegates is that I am going to give you the outcome of the election in the form of the candidate's name, the number of first preference votes secured by the candidate and the count on which the candidate was either elected or eliminated. Liam and Natalie will distribute a sheet showing the full election count. I apologise for the font used in this document, most of you will require spectacles to read it but that was the easiest way to get it on to one page and secondly, you should note that in a number of instances a multiple transfers were affected on a singular count and that's reflected in the sheets. But, Liam and Natalie will distribute them shortly. The total poll was 525,000. Spoilt votes nil. 30 seats and a quota of 16,936.

Broderick	18,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Buckley	20,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Callinan	17,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Cody	18,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Cooke	8,000	eliminated on the 13 th Count
Devoy	17,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Dooley	18,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Doran	17,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Fitzpatrick	18,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Geraghty	19,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Hall	17,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Hall-Callaghan	20,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Jennings	7,000	eliminated on the 12 th Count
Kelly	17,000	elected on the 1 st Count
King	16,000	elected on the 1 st Count without reaching quota
Light	18,000	elected on the 1 st Count
MacGabhann	17,000	elected on the 1 st Count
McCamphill	15,000	elected on the 13 th Count without reaching quota
McGlone	17,000	elected on the 1 st Count
McKeown	18,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Millar	16,000	elected on the 13 th Count without reaching quota
Moore	16,000	elected on the 4 th Count
Morgan	17,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Morrissey	16,000	elected on the 9 th Count
Ní Sheaghdha	17,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Nunan	16,000	elected on 12 th Count
O'Connor	20,000	elected on the 1 st Count
O'Donnell	17,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Ronayne	18,000	elected on the 1 st Count
Speed	16,000	elected on the 9 th Count
Thomas	11,000	elected on the 6 th Count
Ward	13,000	elected on the 13 th Count

So, that is the results of the election. Can I thank Liam and Fergus for their assistance and my fellow Scrutineers, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks for that Billy. On behalf of Conference, congratulate those who were elected and point out that there are a number of changes on the Executive Council and thank those who weren't elected and those who are voluntarily absenting themselves from the Executive Council for the work that they have done in not only the last two years but in preceding years. Thanks Billy.

Can we now move on to Motion No. 29 please.

Mike Jennings, IFUT

Good morning delegates. Happy 4th July. Chairman, I hope you will permit me just to thank those people who supported me in the election and for me to congratulate the successful candidates.

The motion that we are addressing today is a natural follow on from the motion that was dealt with last evening in the name of the TUI with regard to the casualisation of the profession, particularly in higher education and I want to congratulate the Teachers' Union of Ireland for the comprehensive nature of the resolution and to draw your attention by the resolution that we are proposing this morning to a particular quirk and a view set that has come into the system which we are hoping that Congress will take an active interest in. Can I just say as well that it is absolutely astonishing the extent of the casualisation that has come in particularly into higher education and I really do have a sense that it is something that has happened over years without any great awareness not only among the general public but even without any great awareness as in the trade union family. Recently in what was called an employment controlled framework a directive was issued from the Higher Education Authority per the Department of Education that every single appointment in higher education in the university sector, every single appointment was to be a temporary fixed-term contract. Not one permanent person was to be appointed. That is the extent of the problem we are dealing with. And, can I just say in passing by the way delegates, that this is not a phenomenon confined to this island. It is a worldwide phenomenon in terms of higher education. In fact there is a story which may be epochal of our Danish counterpart trade union lodging a complaint and requesting an investigation by the International Labour Organisation in Geneva of the extent of casualisation in the university sector there. And, the document reportedly was referred back because the ILO assumed that it was a mistake and assumed that it couldn't possibly have come either from within the public sector or from a sector of society which they regarded was relatively safe that they simply didn't believe that it wasn't brought to their attention.

Now, I don't know and I don't want to comment on the age profile of people here today but I certainly remember when this body back in the 80s and 90s was absolutely concentrating on the numbers of people who were then engaged in fixed-term contracts and couldn't be made permanent in the public sector and it was a problem that was endemic. And, as a result the State introduced the European Directive on Fixed-term Workers' Rights and the 2003 Act brought it into play. But the purpose of this resolution is to draw attention to a completely cynical abuse of that Act and it is this device that is being used. As you may be aware, under that Act you are entitled to a permanent contract if you have more than two contracts, if you have more than one contract and if you have survived four years in the job. What is happening now in the university sector is that people are being told they are being given a permanent contract literally on the same day that they are being given the redundancy notice to say that their contract is going to expire on such and such a date. Literally, in a Rights

Commissioner hearing this is what we had. The employers' side, in this case Trinity College, told the Rights Commissioner that they weren't contesting the right to permanency, they accepted that the woman had the right to permanency and the Rights Commissioner said 'what are we doing here for?'. And, I said, ask them the next question Rights Commissioner and the next question was when was she going to be made redundant? The answer was 'ah, the 1st October next'. I said that is some permanent contract. The trouble is, delegates, that the Labour Court and the Rights Commissioners service unfortunately seem to be falling for this device which is nothing other than a public lie. And we have already in IFUT suffered three cases – two at a Rights Commissioner and in the Labour Court where they refused jurisdiction, the refused to hear the case because they said that once the employers said they worker was permanent, the worker inso facto was permanent even if they were going in with redundancy notices in their back pocket. That is not acceptable and I want to you to know that it is not short-term people. We have dealt and are dealing with people who have worked in the university sector for ten years, for twelve years, for sixteen years and in one case for seventeen years and all that time been under threat of dismissal. It is absolutely astonishing what is happening. University College, Cork took this union to the High Court and spent €250,000 of taxpayers' money trying to undermine the right to one of their own workers. Now I want to pay tribute to our trade union colleagues in other unions who agreed to underwrite our expenses so that we could afford to match them and say that we would match them euro for euro in the High Court if necessary, and we won that case. We won it, they lost it and the taxpayer pays it. This is a national disgrace. It is an abuse of the law. I am asking you to support this and if I may, Chairman, ask that it be given active attention on the Congress agenda for the coming twelve months. Thank you for your attention, good morning delegates.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Secunder?

Aidan Kenny, TUI

President, delegates, Aidan Kenny from the Teachers' Union of Ireland asking Congress to support IFUT's motion. The Teachers' Union of Ireland works in solidarity with IFUT on the issue of the abuse of fixed-term workers, particularly in regards to the issuing of zero hour contracts, variable hour CID contracts and five-year contracts. This is done to avoid the terms and commitments there are in the 2003 Fixed-term Act. Employers in the Institutes of Technology sector and the university sector are looking for loopholes in order to avoid the commitments in relation to the offering of CID contracts. What we are witnessing at the moment is instead of gaining permanent full-time contracts for our members, our members are on probation for up to four years before the employer will make the decision on whether they are going to get a CID contract. This is the employer's excessive power over employees in order to regulate the working relationship with the employees. The Teachers' Union of Ireland with IFUT have taken cases to the Rights Commissioner, to the Labour Court for CID contacts for our members. We have won some, we have lost some. However, there is a change, a notable change, in the Rights Commissioners and Labour Court in relation to how they look the objective grounds of the ability argument that is being put forward by the employers. And in some cases the employers' viability argument which is based on external funding and decreased student numbers is accepted. What our branches are beginning to do now is support their members by where a case like this arises the branch as well as lodging the case immediately ballot for industrial action in support of our membership. In one case we have a researcher who has a Phd, a Masters and an Honours Degree, served ten years studying, started her career in higher education – she got a five year contract and now the employer is issuing her with a redundancy notice. So much for the knowledge economy and knowledge society that the Minister and the Department of Education & Skills to promote. Delegates, I urge you to support this IFUT motion and I thank you for listening this morning.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress
Speakers?

Catherine Mallen, UNITE

Chair, Conference, Catherine Mallen, UNITE supporting. By fully supporting this motion I would like to draw your attention to the disgraceful misuse of zero hour contracts. Our young and vulnerable are being asked to make themselves available to work for as little as two hours and in trying to gain experience they have no other choice but to comply. I hereby ask Conference to demand that all employers reinstate fair contracts for all. I support, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress
Any more speakers?

Those in favour of Motion 29, please show, carried, thank you.

I am going to call on Derek Keenan, Congress Youth Committee to address Conference. Just before you do, I have to announce that unfortunately, I didn't win the NERI draw for the iPad, most of you didn't either but it was won by Siobhan Curran and that's just to let you know that that is the case. Can I also point out to you that there is, I am advised, another draw for another mini iPad that is being done upstairs by Halligan Insurance Group and I think all you have to do for this one is complete the application form. It is going to be drawn at 11am, so if any of you are nipping out for a cup of tea fill it in.

Derek Keenan, CWU and Congress Youth Committee

Comrades, as academics the world over debate the potential consequences of an impending demographic time bomb, we in the Irish trade union movement can offer them some valuable insight. For that time bomb has well and truly exploded within our movement. In fact that I as a thirty year old man and the Chair of the ICTU Youth Committee is clearly a testament of this reality. In any healthy and thriving trade union movement I would have no such place on such a committee. However, young people are not joining trade unions in huge numbers and when they do are not becoming active members. This presents us all with a huge challenge. Collectively we must ask ourselves the question why. Why are young people not joining trade unions? What is that our young people do not identify with our movement? Why is it that on the centenary of the 1913 Lock-Out, some sections of our youth identify more with the Michael O'Learys of this world rather than those who led us in our historic and heroic struggles. Much of this can be explained by the ideological hegemony of neo-liberalism within Ireland over the last three decades. An era that oversaw festination of entrepreneurship making heroes out of anyone who could make a few quid however dubiously and heaping scorn on those who question the rational of the free market or advance the cause of working people. It was also the era of Social Partnership where a whole generation of young people emerged who had never been on strike and they would receive pay increases without the kinds of struggles that were a catalyst for the wakening of class consciousness and solidarity with previous generations. Twenty-five years of this neo-corporatist arrangement and we still await the introduction of the legal provisions to ensure collective bargaining rights. It was an arrangement that also allowed our movement to be portrayed as self-serving and firmly part of the establishment. This is how large sections of our young see us today but we can change this perception. The unemployment crisis in Ireland is by far the greatest challenge facing our young. Currently Ireland's youth unemployment rate is 26.7%, a figure which would undoubtedly be much larger if it wasn't for the mass exodus of our youth to far off shores. Today solutions to this crisis have been highly regressive and anti-worker. Attacks on JLCs and REAs represent an active class warfare perpetrated by employers who are determined to emerge from this recession in a much stronger and powerful position that when they entered it.

We have seen cuts to employer PRSI which perversely encourage precarious and part-time work at the expense of full-time employment and schemes like JobBridge being used simply as a source of free labour putting downward pressure on wage levels across the economy. Successive budgets have taken almost €28bn out of the Irish economy and decimated consumer demand and hence any job creation prospects. This situation has been further compounded by a wholesale investment strike by the private sector and an ideological aversion to State led investment and provision of sustainable employment. At a European level there has been much hype surrounding a new EU budget which would trigger the release of €6bn worth of funds to combat youth unemployment. While we should welcome any funding which seeks to alleviate the crisis, we must put in context the level of funding made available. It is as European President Martin Schultz suggests, a drop in the ocean and amounts to only 0.13% of the public money that has been pumped in to the European banking system since 2008. To put it in another way, the money pledge for the European youth guarantee over the next two years is less than what the current Fine Gael and Labour Government have taken out of this economy in two highly regressive budgets. There is no doubt that our young people have been disproportionately affected by economic collapse of our country. Emigration, unemployment, precarious work, reduced wages for new entrants, unpaid internships, increased college fees, cuts to grants, cuts to social welfare for those under 25 and the prospect of having to work to the ripe old age of 70 even perhaps beyond. This assault we have yet to see our youth find expression and protest. Why is this the case? The popular myth would suggest that this is owing to the inherently conservative nature of Irish society and we were never ones to protest anyway. This is nonsense as we stand in the shadows of Belfast Docks, we remember the courageous struggles of the Belfast working class in 1907 which preceded the heroic 1913 Lock-Out in Dublin. In more recent years we remember the Irish Ferries dispute and the anti-war march of 2003. We remember and salute the fortitude and resilience of the workers of Vita Cortex, Lagan Bricks and La Senza who faced down the transience of the capitalist class by refusing to accept the manner in which they were treated. By occupying the workplace not only did these workers undermine the cornerstone of the capitalist system but they also showed us what was possible if workers stood together in solidarity. We in the trade union movement need to show a new generation of young workers what they can achieve. We must offer them an agency with radical change they can believe in. The current economic collapse afforded us all the opportunity as trade unionists to do just this. We become relevant to a whole generation by standing in solidarity with them and resisting the ongoing assault on young people both inside and outside the workplace. This is the task that the ICTU Youth Committee has set for itself. We call on trade unionists to support our youth equality and solidarity campaign, 'Yes' campaign. The campaign seeks to mobilise young workers around five key rights which we have identified as of critical importance – the right to a job, the right to a future in Ireland, the right to decent and secure employment, the right to equal pay for equal work and the right to collectively bargain. This is not going to be a campaign based on empty rhetoric and we are acutely aware of what needs to be done to realise our goals. No improvement in the working conditions and standards has ever been just handed down from high but had workers actively struggling to secure them. This campaign is taking a number of actions to highlight these basic rights and to mobilise young workers to participate in the 2013 Pre-budget march in October. We can no longer just pay lip service to the importance of getting young people involved in the trade union movement. We must act.

I stand before you today because my own union, the CWU, has actively encouraged youth participation at all levels of the union. Thanks to the ongoing support of my General Secretary, the National Executive and the committed organising department, the Youth Committee is active and campaigning on issues affecting young people and it is a success because young people have set the agenda. I would encourage all our unions to follow suit

and I am encouraged by recent developments in other unions and with the reestablishment of the ICTU Youth Committee.

Embracing and becoming relevant to young workers is not a choice but an imperative if our movement is to sustain itself into the future. I sincerely hope that we will do just that as I believe our movement to be the greatest mechanism for achieving the kind of transformative change required for the advancement of working people throughout Ireland. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Derek.

Can I now move to Motion 30 standing in the name of UTU.

Stephen McCord, UTU

President, delegates, comrades, Stephen McCord, Ulster Teachers Union moving Motion 30. We live in an era where technology and social media continue to advance with rapid speed. Instantaneous messages, social networking where students are easily exploiting social media to vent their own personal resentments is increasing. There can be no doubt about the seriousness of what education workers are facing with regards to this issue which is commonly referred to as cyber bullying. Dedicated, resolved and hardworking educators are now having to cope with victimisation, harassment originating from outside the school walls. Bullying and harassment continue to evolve but every stride in technological advancement, the streamlining of the increasingly sophisticated software, cyber bullying adds another weapon to its arsenal. Both pupils and parents are using computer based communications that seek to intimidate, control, falsely discredit and humiliate education workers in a deliberate repeated vendetta fuelled assault using the world wide web. So what is happening out there? Pupils are creating hate groups on social networking sites calling for specifically named education workers to be sacked but the most concerning issue at the minute is the use of Facebook. We have had a number of cases where parents have chosen to insult and malign specific education workers on Facebook to the extent that another parent in the friendship group has been concerned enough to approach the school to inform them. Where a teacher is named it has been possible for principals and Chairs of Governors to inform the parents concerned of their awareness of the situation which has often brought the issue to a close. Fake profiles have also been created by pupils in the names of education workers which encourages openly available libellous information. Only last week I heard of another one of these sites where pupils set up the account using the details of a teacher. Of course taking down this site is not quite as instantaneous as its creation as it often takes a minimum of forty-eight hours before the offending comments are removed. In that time the teacher has been humiliated as pupils, parents, colleagues and family unwittingly ask to befriend the site. So identity fakes, misinformation, perceived sexual harassment – what would that do for a teacher? Ruin their self-esteem, ruin their reputation, ruin their career. What is even worse now is that pupils are employing the use of a built in camera, for instance pupils are using their mobiles to photograph or video educational workers and later humiliatingly publish this footage on websites such as u-tube etc. This is only the tip of the iceberg. There are many more cases than these. Without an appropriate mechanism that ensures a satisfactory conclusion to cyber bullying episodes our education workers will continue to suffer in silence. The effects of continued and unchallenged anti-social behaviour of this nature are vast and wide-ranging. These include but undoubtedly are not restricted to emotional distress, depression, loss of job satisfaction, suicide. The impact on the workforce is almost inevitable. Increased stress levels will almost inevitably lead to an increased illness which will further cripple school budgets that are already stretched to the limits.

What are we looking for? Firstly, we don't need another policy. This will have absolutely no impact. Instead we need the Department of Education in both jurisdictions to come together with the trade union movement to launch a campaign to highlight these issues and to develop a joint approach to eradicating these behaviours in the workplace. We must create a robust, zero-tolerance system of dealing with such abuse that would protect our education workers from this victimisation and unacceptable harassment. We need those in decision making to enforce the currently existing legislation which deals with the area of cyber bullying. The Malicious Communications Act 1998, and Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003, the Communications Regulation Act 2007 or the Employment Equality Act, making it an offence to send threatening or malicious electronic communication to another person. Until both Governments and employers recognise that the welfare of the workforce is important and that these issues must be addressed seriously and urgently. This is unacceptable abuse which will not only continue but it is likely to augment. We don't yet know what technology will throw at us next. But, colleagues, we must be ahead of the game. We do not yet have the legislation but if we had guidelines and advice for schools produced and endorsed by the employment authorities and the unions working together, we would be sending out a clear message that this treatment of education workers will not be tolerated. And, secondly, we would know what plan of action to take when it arrives at our own door. Delegates, I move.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress
Seconder?

Séan McMahon, INTO

Séan McMahon, INTO seconding the motion. President, fellow delegates, INTO like every trade union is dealing with an increasing workload arising from incidents of bullying and harassment in the workplace. In the North alone the Labour Relations Agency estimates that it received approximately 1,000 queries a year in this area. These figures indicate that the incidents of this behaviour is highest in the public service with between 12 and 14% of all enquiries into the LRA coming from that particular sector. In relation to bullying and harassment, in the Republic according to the ESRI reports, 7.9% of all those at work reported that they also had suffered bullying and harassment, with women being twice as likely as men to be subjected to this totally unacceptable behaviour. More disturbing perhaps is the fact that 62% of those who perceive that they are being subjected to bullying and harassment in the Republic are too frightened to report it. This is totally unacceptable and it is a damning indictment of the response both of ourselves as trade union leaders and as worker representatives and of course as the employers who are clearly failing in their duty to protect and to eradicate this totally despicable and unacceptable behaviour. The INTO and our colleagues in the UTU are highlighting this issue today and are determined that we seek to ensure that every worker be they teacher, or one of our non-teaching colleagues, are afforded their entitlement to deliver their responsibilities within their workplace and in an environment free of bullying, harassment and the threat of violence. Employers need to realise that these behaviours serve to undermine effective working environments. The responsibility for ensuring that bullying and harassment is challenged and ended rests with us as trade union leaders, rests with the employers and of course with the administration in Stormont and in the Republic of Ireland. This involves the promotion of zero tolerance support to incidences of these unacceptable behaviours and of course to the introduction of more effective reporting and processing mechanisms for dealing with complaints once received. There is an obvious need for appropriate sanctions that reflect the severity of the harm that such behaviours have upon the individuals concerned. To achieve these outcomes, trade unions, employers and Governments must give these issues far greater prominence and demonstrate that we really do care. The trade union movement can do this by bringing to bear our considerable influence in both jurisdictions and perhaps to commence by doing two things immediately; firstly, to ensure that the whole area of workplace bullying is a priority for our

Executive and secondly, to seek to ensure that those who represent us on the Executive of the ICTU do not allow this particular dilemma to drop downwards on the priority list agenda. Workplace bullying is a constantly evolving hydra. I would say to colleagues on behalf of INTO that whether workplace bullying is a reality in West Clare, or in West Belfast, in Labasheeda or Limavaddy, it is very, very real for the teachers, for fellow workers in the education sector. I am delighted to support this motion and I request the support of the floor. Go raibh math agat.

Gerard Croughwell, TUI

President, colleagues, Gerard Croughwell, Teachers' Union of Ireland. I have spoken at our own conference about bullying in the workplace but I want to put things in context. Bullying starts in the schoolyard and it works its way right through their teenage years into their adult years. It might shock some of you to know here today that there are schools in the Republic of Ireland where there are children on suicide watch from staff in the school all day, every day. I am talking about children who are so mentally ruined through bullying that the only option they see is suicide. Let's move on and move to the workforce. Let's profile the bully – who is the bully? The bully is that nice guy or that nice woman that everybody thinks is an affable, easy going, friendly sort of character but when the bully takes his or her target into either the office, they are the tyrant who destroys the mental capacity of the confident, hard-working, high achieving worker and they destroy that person. Why do they destroy them - because he or she threatens them. They are weak, bullies are weak and we need as trade unionists to highlight that. We need to identify these people and we need to cut them out of our system. There is no place for those who attack the mental health of their fellow workers. Just before I finish President, who are the bullied? The bullied are the achievers, the hard workers, the leaders amongst the group, the one people turn to when they are in trouble and ask advice of – that is the person who is bullied. We need to protect those people. Delegates, I ask you to support the motion and I ask Congress to start to profile bullies so as people who suffer at their hands can recognise what is going on before it destroys them. Thank you very much.

Jim McKeown, UCU

President, Congress, Jim McKeown, University & College Unions speaking in support of Motion 30. Firstly, let me congratulate UTU for bringing forward this motion. Bullying at work is widespread. It is not just confined to workers in education. Delegates will recognise the traits in their own industries. In the post-schools sector where I represent members in universities and colleges, our union has conducted many surveys which show that bullying and harassment are the single biggest issues in causing stress and anxiety at work and sickness and absenteeism. It is bad enough for workers to have to endure pay freezes and attacks on working conditions but when bullying and threats to job security are layered on top of that, it leaves people frightened and demoralised and it eats into the fabric of our lives. It is a real health and safety issue but it is also a symptom of the culture of managerialism where bosses seek to impose their will and eliminate any form of dissent or resistance. In April, 2012, UCU brought a motion to the Northern Ireland Conference of ICTU, highlighting concerns by our members at the North West College in Derry. They had endured five years of aggression and intimidation, manufactured redundancies and union reps constantly under attack. We sought Congress's support for an independent inquiry into management at the college. Thank you Congress for that support. That support gave our members hope and we got our inquiry. Following the conference, the Minister for Employment and Learning in the North appointed an independent HR consultant to examine what was going on at the college. In March of this year, he produced a 100 page report which was made public. It showed a culture of fear which prevailed at every level of the organisation. The consultant, Brian O'Connell brought forward over 30 recommendations to lift that climate of fear and restore trust and confidence amongst staff. UCU is working with the governing body of the college to put in place an action plan to prevent management aggression and end the fear factor. We want our members to

be able to go to their work without being hounded by threats that their jobs are constantly on the line or that if they raise their voice they are facing disciplinary action or worse. Congress, it has taken a long time to get to that point. It was only recently when our members balloted for industrial action and the goings on at the college were exposed to the public, politicians and the media. Delegates, many of you work in industries where organisations have bullying and harassment procedures. Bit fat documents, lots of fine words but the reality is that those procedures are worse than useless. They take individual workers down individual routes and always result in a fudge, members feeling that it was a waste of time and the aggressors got off scott free. This movement needs to address bullying in a collective way. The lessons we learned at the North West College show that union solidarity can work. This motion offers a collective way forward, please support.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Jimmy.

Roger Clifford, Craigavon Trades Council

President, comrades, Roger Clifford, Craigavon Trades Council fully supporting this motion and to fully agree with all the sentiments that have been expressed by the previous speakers. I actually want to concentrate on another line in the thing about actual violence in work. I have worked for thirty-five plus years in education and thankfully I haven't experienced a whole lot of violence although I have seen a wee bit but I know other workers and comrades that are not so lucky. And, to make matters worse it is how threats of violence and actual violence is treated often leaves a lot to be desired. One example I want to bring to you is that a female education worker lecturer was actually threatened with sexual violence by a student. Obviously, the student was immediately suspended but after the period of suspension she was told via an email that there was nothing else that could be done and that she would have to have him back in the class. And, then then they added and I want to highlight the word probably, they actually said he probably didn't mean it. Now, fortunately in this case on his own volition the student didn't return to the class so things sort of quietened down for a while. But, however, a year and a half later the college allowed that student to enrol in an evening class with the same lecturer. Now she had been threatened when the school was full, now she faced that person at night time in a three-quarter empty campus and she knew nothing about this until he walked in the door. Now again just by chance there were other students in the class that needed learning support so there were other members of staff there with her and she didn't have to face that situation alone. But that quite simply is not good enough. The motion calls for campaigns to highlight the stress and what have you and it will not be tolerated, but any approach to eradicating this problem really has to have the zero tolerance to violence as its default start position. Support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks. Any more speakers?

Ok, I put Motion 30 to the hall – all those in favour, against, carried.

There was an indication of a speaker to this section of the report? Can I put this section of the report, Section 2, Better Future, Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 to Conference for adoption? Is this adopted? Yes, thank you.

We are going to have the video of the fraternal address from Sharan Burrows, the General Secretary of the ITUC. The last time I spoke to Sharan she was just coming back from the refugee camps in Northern Jordan which we visited during the course of the last ITUC Conference there and I found it very interesting, I found it very informative and committed and I would ask you to pay attention to the video. Can it be showed?

Fraternal Address by Sharan Burrows, General Secretary of the ITUC

Greetings, I very much regret not being able to with you this week. There is no question that this Conference is a critical point in the struggle you are leading for dignity and respect for economic growth, for an end to austerity and of course for collective bargaining in Ireland. The truth is that the global economy is no more secure now than it was at the onset of the crisis. In fact in 2010, we saw celebration amongst national leaders for the 'green shoots' of recovery when growth was at 5% globally. Now it is barely more than 3%, Europe is in recession, we are actually seeing the BRICs countries affected by the global outcome with Brazil having a projected growth for 2013 of no more than 3%. Frankly, the economic model has to change. The model of 21st century capitalism has to be very different to the 20th century. If we are to see a future then we have to see a balance of social and economic outlook. Social Europe – David, I read your speech last week to the ETUC Conference – you are absolutely right that Social Europe is at a critical point that if we don't see nations talk to their people, listen to their people, provide rights, opportunities and most critically jobs, jobs, and jobs and social protection then why would people trust in what is otherwise a sensible integration of nations. An integration, a Europe supported by unions but not without social rights. And so the European social model must be in fact replicated at the national level and I know that you are troubled, indeed you are leading the fight for a sensible approach to debt consolidation, when you know that the debt was 12% in Ireland prior to the crisis and now your children and grandchildren carry a debt of some ten times or more of that, then you have to say why? Why was it that it was seen fitting to bail out the banks but not look to the opportunities for jobs, the future for our children and grandchildren. So, this is our struggle but of course in order to take on these questions, in order to take it up to the international institutions, to Governments not doing the right thing, to build that new economic thinking, we need to build the power of unions. So, I am in awe of the reform that you have already generated. The awkwardness and the transparency with which you have looked at the Irish trade union movement. We are indeed trying to replicate this internationally. We are only 7% of the global economy – 7% organised and that is simply not enough. We can be very proud of the fact that we are the largest, democratic movement on earth with 175 million members and more wanting to join us. That is something to be proud of but with only 7% of 2.9 billion workers, then it simply is not enough. So the ITUC is very committed to building the power of workers and that means that we must organise, organise, organise. We must organise around the things that are important to working people – a job for themselves, for their children, for their grandchildren, social protection and a social protection floor for the poorest of countries who don't have the fundamentals of unemployment insurance, of pensions, of health, education, maternity protection, housing, sanitation, education for all – all of the things that make for a dignified society. We know that these things are on our agenda again. We have to re-battle the issues around all of those essential services. I know the hit, particularly in wages, that your public sector have taken.

I know that community services are at risk because of a lack of public money. We must take these questions on because it is about much more than income. It is about the decency of our societies but wages and jobs, social protection, these things are at the heart of what will not just generate demand but in fact make for the opportunities for the growth in jobs for the future. You can't take on debt, you can't consolidate without the fact that you have leverage from growth that is job centred. So we know that we need investment. We need investment in infrastructure and we challenge the G20 that a trillion euro, half of what was given to the banks, must be fundamental. We know that we have to tackle youth unemployment. The scourge of youth unemployment means that inter-generational optimism has simply disappeared. A global poll tells us that only 13% of people believe that they have any influence over the economic decisions of their Government. That means democracy is vulnerable. And of course with a growing informal economy where women and young people and migrants are pushed into the desperation of informal jobs – now 40% of the

global economy, even in G20 countries between 20 and 80 to 90%, we have to tackle this. These things are no longer divided through North South, they are in fact fundamental union issues.

Jobs, social protection, we can only deal with these questions if we are organised, so the ITUC has three objectives and three objectives only. One is union growth. The second is secure jobs – sustainable incomes and social protection floor. The third is realising rights and as we go to our Congress next year, we will reach out to the unions to actually have the debates about how we tackle these objectives and win. We know that we have to organise around these issues so whether our work is directly organising or in partnership with others, or indeed whether it is providing the scaffolding with rights and policies that we are no longer able to ignore the fact that we must build workers' power.

I know the strength of the Irish trade unions. I know your commitment. In fact your stand at the ILO Conference just last week was something that we all share. Every Government must take responsibility for implementing fundamental labour law. If inequality is the social and economic poison now dogging the world, then the distributional tools are in fact social protection, a minimum wage on which you can live and collective bargaining rights. If these labour laws facilitate the capacity for us to bargain, to fight for those issues, then we can change the trajectory for our children and grandchildren. But, this is a struggle none of us will walk away from. It simply is not possible that we can see another future without trade unions at the centre of the economic and social debates that we must have to make sure that whether it is Social Europe, whether it is in fact the Irish economy or the society that you seek to put in place, then those struggles are not just national, they are international and your strength will add to our strength.

So, all the best wishes for this deliberation. I will be really interested to see the outcomes because building workers' power is the future. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Although she can't hear us, thanks very much for that Sharan. Can we now move on to Motion 31 standing in the name of the IBOA, Banking Sector.

Larry Broderick, IBOA

President, delegates, Larry Broderick, General Secretary, IBOA the Finance Union moving Motion 31. From the outset delegates could I ask this conference to condemn the British Government, RBS and the management of Ulster Bank for the manner they announced this week of the destroying of jobs and banks and branches in the community of both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and call on our campaign to ensure that any change programme is done in full consultation and negotiation. The purpose of this resolution, delegates and colleagues, is to identify to the trade union movement and the public at large the differential treatment between that word bankers and senior bank management that have destroyed this industry and this economy. While senior management destroyed the banking industry, has created austerity for everybody North and South on this island, they have been allowed walk away with Rolls Royce pensions. Walk away with contractual pay, walk away with no accountability and this conference has to say today enough is enough, this must stop. Now contrast colleagues the treatment of senior management, regulators, Government ministers, politicians with our members' treatment. 9,000 jobs, 9,000 jobs have been lost in this industry since 2008. Our members are facing approximately 2,500 further job reductions in the next two and a half years. In addition there has been a fundamental attack on their pay, their pensions, and their terms and conditions of employment. And, where were Government ministers when we came to the negotiating table and said 'we have contractual entitlements – why can't we be treated the same as ministers, as senior management when

their contracts are being protected. That is not good enough colleagues. Now what this resolution tries to create is a number of policies that the movement, as colleagues in private and public sectors, address the challenges of this movement. The first and very important one is to ensure that in the context of redundancies and there will be redundancies, there will not be compulsory redundancy in our industry and I ask you also colleagues to endorse the General Secretary's statement on Tuesday condemning the Northern Ireland Government, the liquidator, the Republic of Ireland Government by endorsing compulsory redundancies in IRBC where their work is being contracted out to Capita on behalf of NAMA on lower terms and conditions of employment. That is an outrageous position to be facing.

Can I also say, colleagues, you need to know what the vision of banking is and has three themes. Screw the customer, crap service, close of branches and rip you off to increase charges and services. Is that a banking industry that we need to be related to? The second scenario – screw the staff, take away their pension schemes. We have an ironic situation, colleagues, that the Government that owns AIB, owns Bank of Ireland – a minority shareholder, owns Permanent TSB is standing over the removal of defined benefit pension schemes for our members and we must support them at this time. And, the third scenario, colleagues, is screw the country because we all know and we all hear it every day the need to capitalise the banks and who is going to pay to capitalise the banks? We are going to pay to capitalise the banks but what are Government going to do? We are going to take the debt and are going to sell those banks off to multi-nationals nice and clean and we are paying that debt for the next twenty years. It is not acceptable and it must be challenged by this conference.

And, finally colleagues, isn't it remarkable that after five years it takes the Independent to wake Government up and this nation about the need for an enquiry. We have been calling on an enquiry in this industry for the last eight years and the enquiry cannot be political point scoring. We want to know what happened? Who was responsible? We want them to be accountable and more importantly we need to know lessons for the future and the trade union movement must be to the fore in ensuring that that enquiry protects customers, protects taxpayers and protects our members. I ask you to support the resolution, thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Larry.

Gerry Hanna, IBOA

President, colleagues, Gerry Hanna, IBOA. As I second the motion to conference, I just want to point out a few things. There are a number of contradictions on this island currently and if you look recently at what the UK regulator is attempting to do, the issue of the risk guidelines which is an attempt, maybe too late but it is an attempt to regulate the industry here in the UK properly and get a culture which we all can work within. What does the Republic of Ireland regulator do on the 1st of July? He removes probably the only piece of consumer protection which is left. A restriction on the banks was lifted to allow the banks to contact customers who are in arrears as many times as they wanted to contact them. The banks can do what they want now folks. Please support this motion.

Joe Conroy, UNITE

President, Chair, Joe Conroy, Finance Sector, UNITE. Yesterday we discussed precarious employment. There can hardly be any more precarious employment than the banking sector with the loss of 9,000 jobs since 2008 and as we saw yesterday, many more planned in Ulster Bank and elsewhere. Our members are victims of the excesses of the bosses' greed, strategies and recklessness and the anger of the tax payer left with an €85 billion bill. The reality is that the vast majority of our members in banking are on salaries of less than €45,000. Over the

last five years they have suffered pay freezes and pay cuts and incidentally currently in the EBS they voted 91% in favour of strike action to secure a Labour Court Recommendation to pay their 13th month payment that the company is refusing to pay. Other measures are non-payment of increments over the last five years, non-payment of performance rewards and that's a payment system, colleagues, that Minister Howlin is promoting under the banner of reform in the public sector. There has also been wind-down and closure of defined benefit pension schemes replaced by defined contribution schemes with extra member contributions and slashed redundancy terms. The Government commissioned Mercer report on bankers' pay, advises that lower paid bank staff are overpaid as compared with the market. This is a deeply flawed report and a contortion of the truth. Minister Noonan has used this report to demand further 10% cuts across the banking sector. Nowhere has this been more stark than for members in Permanent TSB. The CEO advised in a mail to staff that they see their 10% pay cut or even more job cuts or scrap the DB pension scheme, strategically and without consultation he chose to wind up the defined benefit scheme, thus savagely affecting members' past accrued benefits amounting to thousands and thousands individual members. Secondly, he reduced further their contributions, the defined contribution scheme going forward, so effectively he hit members a double whammy. He refused to address the deficit issue in the scheme and tidied up the balance sheet for future take-overs. Clearly, colleagues, this behaviour sets a precedent and has implications for all union members in the defined benefit schemes in deficit and needs to be resisted.

The record so far as Larry has previously outlined is there is no enquiry into the causes of one of the biggest bank collapses in the world. There are no prosecutions five years later on for senior bankers responsible. There is no change in the sales culture and there is no resolution of mortgage arrears. There is no consultation with staff or their representatives about the future of the banking sector and of course there is massive job losses, the slashing of members' terms and conditions and there is the introduction of anti-union legislation in the way of the Credit Institutions Stabilisation Bill, which basically gives the Government free reign over workers in the finance sector. Our members are in fear of their jobs and they are in fear of compulsory redundancies. Nowhere will there be a threat more imminent in relation to compulsory redundancies in the banking sector. So, I reiterate and I support this motion and I call on Congress, the IBOA and UNITE to mobilise our members to resist any attempts of compulsory redundancies with the next year. And, the Government must move to set up a special forum immediately in relation to workers' issues in the industry and the reshaping of the industry for the future, to avoid all those ills that Larry has espoused to. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Joe. Any other speakers? I put the motion to conference, those in favour, against, carried.

Can we move on then to Motion 32, standing in the name of USDAW.

Ku Baiden, USDAW

Ku Baiden moving Motion 32 on behalf of USDAW. President, Congress the economic crisis and Government austerity policies are having a big impact on all sectors. The UK and Irish Governments said that austerity is necessary to revitalise the economy. They say the public sector cuts will lead to recovery and in the private sector. But the reality is that all workers across both the public and private sectors are facing the squeeze in their incomes and threats to job security. USDAW organises in the private sector mainly in retail and we can see that the austerity policies are not leading to recovery in the private sector. It is not working. The retail sector across Ireland is having a very tough time. Retail workers, North and South, face the threat of redundancy, short hours and a squeeze on pay. 50,000 workers have lost their jobs across the Irish retail sector since the start of the recession. Big names have disappeared

from the retail high streets in towns and cities across Ireland with Woolworths being one of the first high profile names to go out of business. And, at the start of this year HMV was the latest big retailer to go into receivership. Fortunately, some of the HMV stores have been saved but hundreds of workers in Ireland have lost their jobs as many of them remain closed and with no prospect of reopening. Although there is good news with B&Q Ireland having recently come out of examinership saving 600 jobs, it doesn't hide the disturbing fact that a major retailer like B&Q Ireland was very close to going out of business. Congress, many ICTU trade unions are doing great work in organising in the private sector. It must be applauded and profiled. We need to get the message out to all workers that if you fear for the future of your job or you are concerned about the falling standards of living, the best place to be is in a trade union. Recruiting and organising in the private sector must be at the heart of the ICTU's organising strategy if our ambitions are to be realised. I urge you all to support this motion, I move. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Seconder? Go ahead.

Paddy McWilliams, NIPSA

Conference, Paddy McWilliams from NIPSA to support this motion. Conference, I spent twenty-eight years working in the hospitality industry before I became a civil servant and I am aware of the similarities that exist between hospitality and the retail industry and the difficulty there is in organising in those industries. One of the problems is the actual structure of the industries themselves. A lot of them are single business units. It makes it difficult to get communication between workers in various outlets and we faced a lot of the same problems, particularly in terms of little or no terms or conditions at all, low pay, casualisation whereby if a business was a little bit slack you get less work, less hours, and one of the big problems I found with it was that there is very little knowledge of what trade union membership could bring in terms of benefits. For example, the minimum wage – a lot of staff are paid the minimum wage but they don't get enough hours. They get a living wage and there is an interesting scenario. It is an acknowledgement that the minimum wage isn't a living wage. In effect, Governments are actually handing subsidies to poor employers on the basis that they pay poor wages and then those people who have the top in the North here through the tax credit system, they actually demonise people for receiving the benefits. Conference, what this is an opportunity for us. There is a lot of logic in that a rising tide does lift all boats and in this scenario it does. We have a very, very difficult scenario of getting across our message to the public that cuts on our pensions, for example, cuts on services, cuts on our jobs, that these affect all of society. Now, we have to fight through this propaganda because they have manufactured a consent in society that it is ok to take 10% of my pension, sure you don't have a pension at all – why would you come out and support me in losing 10% of mine? Conference, we need to get all workers into a union. We need to build up a body of people who are prepared to come out and support us when we put our necks out on the line. I work in a public sector, the private sector and the public sector have to stand in line together in this because this is one thing that Cameron is actually right in – we are all in this together. As a class we are all in this together. As a society there is 1% and 99%. We need to get the 99% a stronger voice and we will do that by organising in industries such as retail and in hospitality. Please support this motion, it is very important.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Speakers to the motion? Put the motion to the floor. Those in favour, against, carried.

Motion 33, CPSU, Impact of Government Economic Policies on Low and Middle Income Earners.

Eoin Ronayne, CPSU

President, colleagues, good morning. This motion was written before the 'David and John phone show' and in a sense we really have to thank the broadcasters and the journalists for bringing that to our attention because it has made the anger and the resentment and the feeling of dejection and disillusionment amongst most of our members more real to them and maybe that is the catalyst for this movement to begin to build on that anger and disillusionment to change the world we live in. This motion is about apportioning the blame for what has happened on those who were responsible. These are real people and these have shown up how real they are. But, their principles and what they stand for are light years from where we come from. And yet, the only people who can really bring about that change are Government and we need to work to get Government to bring a better, fairer way and it is only Government that can do this. It is galling that this Government above all in this centenary year is doing nothing about it. Yes, they can find two and a half days in their legislative calendar to rush through legislation to crush public sector workers but can they do anything about those bankers? Can they bring in legislation to it? Why does it take so long to bring in an enquiry? What is it about the rich and the powerful that makes them so rich and powerful and public sector workers and private sectors workers so weak? We can be the difference. It is a challenge to this movement to take on the 'Davids' and the 'Johns', to take on the Government and to bring a fairer, better way. We have devised a toolkit through NERI and we talked about it this week, but we need now to articulate that vision that we have. I am conscious that we are in Belfast and a song comes to mind called 'Alternative Ulster' by Stiff Little Fingers, well we have an alternative vision for Ireland. Let's tax the higher tax bands for those at the top of the earnings in the structure of society. Let's have a real wealth and property tax and not a mickey mouse local property charge. Let's have a real investment package for job stimulus and put money back into the pockets of ordinary workers who will spend every cent that they get. One thing we all agree on is the need for growth but if you haven't got money you can't spend it. It is time now for us to turn the wheel to build a movement that will look for that alternative vision, decent work, a better future. Let's leave here today united and strong, stand together and let's build that alternative vision, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you.

Joan Byrne, CPSU

Good morning delegates, Joan Byrne, CPSU seconding the motion. Colleagues, I stand before you this morning as a low-paid civil servant. Along with the rest of my colleagues from the CPSU, we are left facing unfair and undeserved hardship by a Government that seems hell bent on making the rich richer and the poor poorer. The ears of our Government have been closed to the cries from those who bear the unjust burden placed on them because of the mismanagement of those in the banking sectors and those who profited by speculation in the property market. Not for us the chance to escape the crisis and head to foreign shores to live it up. We are the ones left to pick up the pieces and take on the burden of repaying a debt that was never ours to begin with. My members earn just about enough to support themselves and their families. Indeed, some earn so little that they are entitled to claim Family Income Supplement from the Department of Social Protection. We represent members in the cultural institutes who depend on overtime to bring their pay up to the minimum wage standard. Well I say enough is enough. It is time for those in Government to treat us all fairly to ensure that those who can pay do pay, to ensure that those who played such a major part in creating the banking debt now pay the price for their failure and leave those of us who have been doing our part in keeping our country going alone. It seems to me that we are the soft target. I think that if the trade union movement is to survive then we need to be sending a loud and clear message to the Government. If the Government are not listening then I think we need to relook at how we do our business. Colleagues, we are a trade union movement that fights for

the rights of its members, not a movement that says 'Yes, Minister', and allows our members to be forced to take cut after cut. Maybe in our restructuring in the organisation we need to rethink our ideas and find new ways of having our voices heard. I ask you to support the motion.

Roisin Byrne, UNISON

President, delegates, Roisin Byrne, UNISON supporting Motion 33. UNISON members identify strongly on this call to the Government to respond to the demands for better pay for low-paid workers. We are making those same demands for our members on the Westminster Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly. In GB and Northern Ireland this comes on the back of the years of pay-freezes and we now have a second year of a 1% pay cut. But even this isn't enough. Public workers across Britain and Northern Ireland also face the threat of losing incremental pay progression – an absolute basic necessity for tackling issues of equality and the development of experienced and skilled workers. There is even a suggestion from the Westminster Tories that the minimum wage may be the next target. All in all we have a moral sapping picture in which it is fairly miserable to keep up with inflation and soaring costs of basics such as food, water, heating and electricity. This is a damning indictment of illogical Government who have decided that the public service workers should pay for this. Congress must continue to oppose Government policies that place an unfair burden on the working class and should continue to campaign for a pay increase as they key way of tackling income inequality in work poverty and of stimulating economic recovery. Please support this motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you. No other speakers? Put Motion 33 to the floor – those in favour, that's carried.

Just to remind you that Motion 34 has been withdrawn. We are going to put the Emergency Motions, No. 1 and 2 to the floor but before we do, we are going to call on our Guest Speaker, David Evans to address conference. David is current President of the Wales TUC. I was at their conference when he took over the Chair and it was a Conference that I have to say I found particularly uplifting given the comments of Carwyn Jones, the First Minister which I referred to on Tuesday. He also on his immediate ascension into the throne took a substantial step towards job maintenance in Wales and he started speaking in Welsh which meant that the interpreters who they have in the hall as it is a bi-lingual conference, had some work to do during the course of the conference. David, thanks very much.

Fraternal Address by David Evans, President of Wales TUC

President, Conference, you will be pleased to know that I am not going to speak in Welsh today so hopefully you will still be able to understand everything I say, apart from the accent that is. I have to say as well for all those rugby followers at conference, I do find a little intimidated to have to bring fraternal greetings from Wales the day after a Welsh coach drops Brian O'Driscoll. I wanted to put on the card before you started on me the fact that if I had been selecting the side, Brian O'Driscoll would definitely have been in it. My wife actually told me that if you do start to boo me, that I just had to take one from the team, so consider it taken.

Can I start now by stating how delighted and privileged I am to be able to bring fraternal greetings to you today as President of the Wales TUC. This is my first visit to Belfast and I only have been here for a few hours and I have already been in awe of the welcome I have received. Certainly the taxi drive in from the airport was enjoyable. When the driver asked me my name I said it was David but my friends call me Dave. He said, ah great, you can call me Paddy. I have absolutely no idea if that was his real name. He then said where to, I said the Assembly Buildings Conference Centre, he said he had never heard of it. I have no idea of whether he was actually a taxi driver! If he wasn't, I like to think that he was a former

member of one of your trade unions who currently finds himself out of work and with a bit of ingenuity decides to police a gullible guy from Wales of thirty quid!

Perhaps it is the knowledge that I am undertaking official duties in a fellow Celtic nation that brings warmth us despite the attempts of Warren Gatland because he is a New Zealander! There is a bond that has always existed and I trust will endure forever more. Both Wales and all of Ireland are currently suffering because of austerity measures being imposed upon us and having a devastating effect on our economies. In Wales we are feeling the brunt of measures being imposed by policies handed down by Westminster that have little regard to the realities of the lives that we are expiring to and our own social economic needs. We in Wales have a devolved Government with whom the Wales TUC has an excellent relationship. Sadly, we also have to bear the brunt of decisions from Westminster that directly impacts on the quality of our lives in Wales. A way back in 757, the King of Mercier was able to come up with a very simple solution to the divisions that then existed between us Celts and the Anglo Saxons. Offa's Dike was built – it was 65 foot wide and 8 foot high along the border of England and Wales. Further north, where our Scottish cousins live some six hundred years earlier the Emperor Hadrian decided to build a wall. He wanted to separate his Roman Legion from the Scottish barbarians. You, of course, have never needed such construction because the Irish Sea actually did the job for you. What would we now give to widen, deepen and heighten Offa's Dike to keep the decisions of Westminster away from us? What would the Scots give for a few more courses of bricks laid on top of that most famous of walls? How would you like and desire a bit of a maelstrom churning up the Irish Sea? We want to protect us all from some of the decisions from Westminster. Austerity measures are not working. Austerity measures never do work. The impact to date is a crisis in economic growth and in living standards. It is our members, our families, our communities that are such afraid and are suffering and, it is the likes of the trade union movement in Wales and here in Ireland is having to pick up the pieces. Day to day, communities across Wales, communities across Ireland see this crisis worsen. Those of us active in the trade union movement, those who work in Citizen Advice services, those who attend Assembly Members' surgeries, those who write to the newspaper letters' columns, those who write the articles, research the programmes, produce all the research, all spell out the same message – austerity does not work. People are struggling. They are struggling to keep their heads above water. They are struggling to cope with demands imposed by cuts in benefits, struggling to cope with the wage freezes, struggling to cope with the job losses. They are quite simply struggling to survive. I can give you some facts and I know that you will find comparisons here in Ireland. Did you know that the overall Welsh pay packet has shrunk by £2.3 bn in real terms since 2007? I am sure it is the same here. Did you know that the attacks to our welfare system in Wales will blow a £1 bn hole in our economy? I know it is the same here in Ireland. Do you know that the unemployment figures are hitting record levels in some of our poorest areas, both in Wales and in Northern Ireland and the Republic? We live in a modern Wales, you live in a modern Ireland, yet research last year shows that one in five people missed a meal to make ends meet. In a modern Wales the number of people turning to food banks for help shot up from 11,000 in 2011 to a staggering 29,000 in 2012. We live in a modern Wales that sees tax cuts for millionaires – admittedly we don't have too many of those. We live in a modern Wales that sees tax evasion for multinational companies operated in Wales and austerity for everyone else. I know that the situation is the same here. By taking the opportunity to read Eugene's address to you from Tuesday – in it he mentions the position being taken by our First Minister, Carwyn Jones with regard to trade unions in Wales. Our First Minister subscribes to the view that trade unions are an integral part of our society in Wales and that there will be no privatisation of public service jobs in Wales. Obviously we are absolutely delighted by the attitude being taken by the Labour Welsh Government and I have attended our Workforce Partnership Council meeting where we are able to thrash out problems that can exist before they develop. Eugene was accurate in his reflections of his visit to Wales and

genuine in his envy of his relationship we have with the Welsh Government. I commend the approach of the Workforce Partnership Council to you. And, yet, we still suffer. We still find it hard to struggle to get by because financial decisions which have a serious effect upon us are being presided over by a condemned Westminster Government that cares little for what is happening outside of the Home Counties. It is a Westminster Government whose interests start and finish with the employer and never reach the employee. That is fundamentally wrong. That is an interest that serves only to suppress the living standards of the majority for the bigoted self-interest claims of a minority. Wales rejects austerity, Ireland rejects austerity. As long as the ICTU campaign on behalf of the 832,000 trade union members in both Northern Ireland and the Republic, as long as the Wales TUC's campaign on behalf of the 500,000 trade union members in Wales, as long as the TUC's campaign across the UK and Ireland – we will prove and foster the idea that there is hope and opportunity. Britain has not lost the skills, the knowledge or the ingenuity of the workforce upon whom we all rely – that was proven to me by the taxi driver this morning. Wales has not lost those skills, Ireland has not lost those skills. As long as austerity keeps holding them back we will fight for a future that works. We have to fight for a future that works.

I see the strapline for the conference is 'Decent Work, Better Future' – I couldn't agree more. The trade union movement in Wales fully concurs with that aim and it fully supports your fight on this island for communities in both jurisdictions.

President, Conference, thank you very much for inviting me and taking the time and trouble to listen to my little rant. I first met David and Eugene at the Council of the Isles in Cardiff earlier this year. We were able to discuss ideas then and it is very clear that the trade union movement in Wales fights for exactly the same cause as the trade union movement in Ireland, and we fight to win. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

I have something for you, don't go away. It falls on me to actually present this to you but because you didn't mention a certain Hooker who plays for Ulster, who should have got run-out with the Lions, never mind BOD, but we have a presentation David, thanks to Jimmy Kelly the Regional Secretary of UNITE, for our guest speakers at conference, this is a replica of the monument to the civil war veterans that was unveiled here in Belfast a few years ago. It is done by a local artist and accept it with thanks on our behalf for coming. Thank you David.

David Evans, President of Wales TUC

Thanks Eugene, that will find pride of place in my office. Actually, when I saw the bag down there I thought it was Eugene's sandwiches but clearly it wasn't! Thank you very, very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks very much David.

Can we now move on to Emergency Motion No. 1 being moved by SIPTU.

Eddie Mullins, SIPTU

Eddie Mullins, SIPTU moving Emergency Motion No. 1 on behalf of SIPTU and IMPACT. President, delegates, let me first thank you for allowing us to put this Emergency Motion to be debated here today. Why is the motion so important? It is important because of the very real threat that is there to the workers' jobs in Local Development Companies in the Republic of Ireland. The history of the alignment to date – in 2011 the Minister for the Environment and Local Government, Phil Hogan, set up a group to explore the alignment. He nominated nine persons to that group. Astonishingly, there was no one from the local development companies who had been delivering this project for twenty years plus, they are the experts. They were

kept out of the process. They produced a report in 2012 and he then established a group to oversee the implementation of the alignment process and again, astonishingly, the representatives of the local development companies were kept apart from that process. Eventually, ILDN, the Local Development Network got three seats in that process. They represent the CEOs of the organisation. There is no seat for workers in that group. The Minister has made several statements. He has spoken in the Dáil, he has spoken in the Seanad and he has put out several statements to the media that there will be redundancies and there will be job losses and it is the members that we represent in the local development companies that will have their jobs gone as a result of all of this. Each year all of these companies are audited and separately then the Court of Auditors of the EU are entitled to carry out an audit of any one of those companies, or all of those companies and they did that in the last two years in Westbank Development Partnership and guess what colleagues? They found that there was best practice in the local development companies. They were very supportive of it. They found that there was nothing to hide, they gave it a very, very clean bill of health. Now, who do we believe – the Court of Auditors who completed the audit process or the Minister who has never to date even carried out an audit. I know who I believe.

President, delegates, I think it is quite ironic this year as we remember and celebrate the Lock-Out of 1913, that there are workers in 53 local development companies who are experience their own Lock-Out at this point and time. There are locked out and their representatives are locked out from the discussions that are taking place that will affect their jobs and will come back to haunt them in the near future. I ask you to support this motion.

Geraldine O'Brien, IMPACT

Geraldine O'Brien, IMPACT seconding this motion. President, delegates, the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government has made a number of statements in relation to the policy document of Government called 'Putting People First'. Part of this proposal is to proceed with the alignment of local leader partnership companies into Local Government. If the alignment of the local partnership companies proceed without participation, consultation and agreement from staff and Congress, it is our view that there is a potential of anything up to 1,900 plus jobs lost from the community sector, members who do not have the protection of the Haddington Road Agreement or any other agreement that is out there. Staff of the local leader partnerships have to deal with large budget cuts over the last number of years with more to follow. They have had to deal with redundancies and in some parts cuts to their selves and have not had the benefit of any enhanced package or LRC agreement in relation to redundancies. It needs to be said that the local companies are there to provide a service to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities across Ireland and in particular there is an importance in the area of training for the unemployed, back to education for the early school leavers, childcare, disability services and rehabilitation. We have listened to a number of speakers over the last few days quoting the levels of unemployment right across the sector in our society and we have a dedicated cohort of people who have expertise and commitment to deliver vital services to some of the most vulnerable in our society who have been ignored in the process and are not being given an opportunity to have a say in their future. Some would say, where is that putting people first? I urge you Conference to support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you. Any other speakers to Emergency Motion No. 1? Can I put the motion to the floor, those in favour, agreed.

Emergency Motion No. 2, standing in the names of several organisations. Who is moving it? You moving it Jimmy, it is UNITE, CPSU, INMO and IBOA.

Jimmy Kelly, UNITE

Morning Conference, Jimmy Kelly, UNITE moving Emergency Motion on Emergency Legislation and as Eugene said in the names of ourselves, INMO, CPSU and IBOA, hoping to get full support of all affiliates for the motion.

Some delegates have come here discussing various aspects of what's happening in our country in terms of industrial relations and some delegates have called it a war, that there is actually a war happening in terms of the attacks on working people. Well the Government agrees that it is a war. They have introduced emergency legislation, special powers for the Government to attack working people exclusively in that legislation and if we are ever going to again have a national day of action like we did on Irish Ferries, then this has to be the issue where we campaign, where we build a campaign and build for a national day of action against this sort of legislation that is being imposed by the Government. It is also, delegates, an opportunity for us to unify the movement. We have had our disagreements. We have had our arguments – Croke Park 11, Haddington Road – this is an opportunity for all affiliated unions in Congress to come together, not the usual suspects, not expecting that we have a march or protest from the same point finishing at the same. Not expecting the General Secretary to perform a miracle with correspondence and lobbying, it has to take action if we are serious about defending workers' rights and pushing back the Government on working rights. Look at the contrast with the treatment for those at the top of society. No special powers, no special laws to even get them to pay their taxes, no special laws to arrest the people who brought this country to a disaster and yes, the tapes confirm they do laugh at us behind our backs and that goes on every day. We have got to put it to the Labour Party. If the Labour Party and just imagine if they even said, look on the economy we have our disagreements, on cuts we have our disagreements, on the Troika we have our disagreements but we are saying clearly, on the issue of workers' rights the Labour Party will bring down this Government to defend workers' rights and defend the principles of trade union rights – imagine if they only said that. And, I want to refer to the fact that there are principled people in the party. I don't know Roisin Shorthall well, she has helped UNITE on a few issues, she has taken a principled stand against political manipulation by the Health Minister, paid for her principles with her job as a Junior Minister and probably paying with her principles for a future job at full Minister and full Cabinet level. That is principle. That is all we are asking for and other people in the party have done the same. Standing for those principles, the Labour Party will connect with their roots and connect with the historical reference that has been made here on the 1913 Centenary issues that we are dealing with in 2013. Delegates, this is an issue that has to be confronted. All of those workers' rights, employment rights and trade union rights, we have got to advance the interests of the members we represent, show the members we represent that the movement is united to defend their interests in the workplace and against legislation which attacks our rights, thank you.

Eoin Ronayne, CPSU

Eoin Ronayne, Civil and Public Services Union. I got an awful fright this morning – I woke up, I thought the radio was on and there were voices, it seemed to be Morning Ireland and something about the Independent Newspaper Group and a guy called Brendan and a guy called Enda and they were having a laddish chat about screwing public sector workers and €1 bn and we would get €300 million out of them. I was getting really, really worried and then they said, you know if they don't play ball, we will dump FEMPI on them and I realised then that the radio wasn't on at all and I know then of course that Brendan and Enda wouldn't talk about us like that and better again, how could I ever think the Independent Group given the attacks they have done on their own workers, that they would do anything to help the trade union movement by playing tapes.

So, where are we? This is not a public service issue only. This is a very serious attack by employers, let's not call them the Government, let's call them employers, on workers. It is basically based on the notion that, and I think it was Patricia mentioned it yesterday in non-unionised companies where the company sets up a Workers' Representative Forum and they know the outcome of it because of course they told the workers what the outcome should be before they go into discuss. And that is what FEMPI is. FEMPI is saying to the trade union movement, when we come to negotiate with you, we have a way of resolving the crisis. We know it's the best way. We will allow you to tinker with it but at the end of the day, if you don't play ball with us and pass it, then we will impose it on you anyway and it will be even worse. Now that is not free collective bargaining. That is workers going into to discuss with their employer who has both their hands preferably tied behind their backs. Government has all the power in that relationship and it is on the statue book, in theory because there is a financial emergency. It will be incumbent on this movement to ensure that we seek the end to that legislation because if I was a private sector employer I would be saying the next step has to be to make all recommendations from the Labour Court legally enforceable and binding on the worker as Section 20 does. This is a very dangerous piece of legislation. The philosophy behind it is the problem and it is that we have to get to the root of. We must stand together to ensure through Congress that we get a date to repeal that legislation, to get a commitment from Government that that legislation will fall and that legislation won't stay on the statue books. That is the challenge that we must face and that is why I am asking you to support this emergency motion. FEMPI has no place in a democratic society. We wouldn't take it in some of the countries we were discussing during the week, why should we take it in Ireland, please support.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Speakers?

David Hughes, INMO

David Hughes, Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation speaking in support of the motion. Well, Frankfurt's way turned out to be Labour's way after all. We have heard all week about the international campaign to worsen pay and conditions of workers generally and if there is such an international campaign well then no Government has taken it on with greater gusto than our own. And, our own does include the Labour Party who were elected by a lot of worker votes. The problem with this legislation is not just the immediate impact. It was used and is being used to coerce people into voting for an agreement which they don't like but they have to go with it rather than have a worse piece of legislation promoted and you might say that is strategy. The real problem with this legislation is that it can go on and on and on and particularly Section 4 which is already being used in the workplace by, well, if you don't change your roster then it will be imposed on you by the Minister through legislation And, that threat will continue because the legislation doesn't go away at the end of the three years of the agreement and can be renewed on an annual basis. That creates the prospect that every negotiation with the public service in the future will be held against the backdrop of a threat that the legislation will apply. That's the reality now. So, we have an obligation to the people that we represent to ensure that the legislation ends and it is repealed. As Eoin has said there is no place in a democratic society for this draconian legislation and the decision to do it was a policy decision. There were alternatives put forward by Congress in relation to taxation. We know what has happened in relation to the major multi-nationals and the small amounts that they contribute or the very negative impact that they have in terms of the State's finances by using our tax law to filter running through and not pay tax on it. Those choices were avoided and the choice was made to take this money from people who were working in the public sector and there may be an agenda to extend this further into some of the private sector. We must remember that this legislation was introduced by Labour and Labour do have an affinity with workers if not necessary with the trade union movement at the moment.

Labour must be told in our campaign that they owe it to the workforce, both public and private, to ensure that Government or employers are not left with the most weapon of mass destruction against pay and terms and conditions that they have ever had. Labour introduced this law, it is Labour's obligation to make sure that if and when they are leaving office it doesn't remain in the hands of an even more right-wing Government, thank you.

Pat King, ASTI

Pat King, General Secretary of ASTI. Colleagues, I just want to begin first of all by congratulating the President on his address on Tuesday for his attack on the FEMPI Act in that it is an attack on workers, on all workers. I have a fear that there are people in this hall who haven't read the FEMPI Act. I speak on behalf of people who are currently being affected right now by the FEMPI Act. A small number of unions remain outside the Haddington Road Agreement and colleagues, you will agree and the ASTI is one of them, you will agree that that is our right. Our members will make their own decision on Haddington Road over the coming months. What is unacceptable is that we will be making that decision in a context where we are being blackmailed by Government. You could ask if you want to for a moment imagine that you are in Government. What will we do with the troublesome teachers? The answer is certainly not draconian anti-worker legislation. This legislation was not written for teachers. This legislation was written with all workers in mind. It was written long before Croke Park 2 discussions concluded, long before we launched into Haddington Road. It is being threatened since last September and it is a threat to all unions. As I was driving to Belfast last Monday, the FEMPI Act came into effect. On that day the Government unilaterally cut the wages of my members, they froze the salaries of my members, they froze the salaries of the lowest paid teachers in the country. 30% of our members are part-time and temporary. This has targeted the lowest paid, people earning €10,000, €15,000, €20,000 a year. They have already been hit and now they are being hit again. FEMPI contains powers about which everyone in this Assembly should be concerned. It empowers the Government to unilaterally change the working hours and the working conditions of public servants. It allows them to tear up contracts and to re-write them. The great majority of people here in the public service have voted for Haddington Road, we respect that. However, your vote, I don't want to be offensive about it, your vote was not a free vote. It wasn't a choice between Haddington Road yes or no. It was a choice between Haddington Road or FEMPI. From now on Governments and employers can say there is an offer on the table, you can accept it or reject it, however, if you don't accept it this is what you will get. Think about future pay negotiations. Both sides will line up for honest, respectful talks in good faith but the Government side can say well if you don't like it here is something we have already prepared. Colleagues, this legislation changes the nature of pay negotiations. It has to be proposed by all unions and by Congress. I support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Next speaker.

Miriam Duggan, ASTI

President, Congress, Miriam Duggan. I am a member of ASTI and I also welcome this motion. Just going to put it in very simple terms. Give me what I want or I am going to take it anyway. In fact I am not just going to take it, I am going to take it and a whole heap more. I am not going to tell you what more is, I am going to leave you frightened. Do you know, I am a teacher and if I heard that in the playground I would call it bullying, I actually would. I call it bullying and because I don't believe in such a lack of justice, I would do everything in my power to support the person who is being bullied. That's FEMPI, that is FEMPI and if it hasn't hit you yet it will. In fact it is more than FEMPI, it is almost a quote from our own Minister for Hardship, Brendan Howlin during the recent consultation process and the fact that that same

Minister is a member of the Labour Party is an irony that is both pathetic and perverse and I hope people are noting it.

As I support this motion, it is also my first time at an ICTU convention so I am learning how things are, I was surprised that it was an emergency motion because this is the big, burning issue. Our General Secretary told you that all negotiations ever more will be different because of this legislation. And, I think we need to reflect both on the legislation, its impact for all of us and for all workers and we also need to reflect on why it is an emergency motion and why it wasn't one of the first items on the agenda here at the convention. Because, one thing I have learned in coming here to ICTU is that I heard people speaking about the fact that 'together we are strong'. That is what I am taking home in my head, together we are strong, separated and we are not. So as I support this motion, I would ask Congress to not only support it, not only adopt it as a matter of policy, not only speak out about it, I would hope that Congress would take it on board and that it would inspire all union members to agitate against this legislation. Really we have to be aware of what it means to us. So, I ask you to support the motion. I ask you to be aware of the fact that FEMPI as I said will change all negotiations for ever more and I ask that ICTU take it on board and work against this legislation. Thank you very much.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Just before you do speak, can I just clear a point up there. There is a good reason why this is an emergency motion and I think most of you in the room should know it and that is that motions need to be submitted eleven weeks before the conference. This event happened well after that eleven week deadline, that's we do have the provision for emergency motions, thank you.

Ciaran Christie, ASTI

Thank you President, Ciaran Christie, ASTI. Firstly, on a side issue I just want to say that I am not a member of a political party, I never have been and what I have to say doesn't come from any such perspective. But, I was bloody glad Eamon Gilmore didn't show up yesterday to be frank about it. Because it would have been very difficult to stomach his words quite frankly when it is a Labour Minister who dreamed up this legislation and brought it to the Dáil and got it passed. Legislation that the great minds in Ryan Air wouldn't have been fit to come up with on a bad day. The fact of the matter is, President, I echo your sentiments of the other day. In fact I will go further. I think the Labour leadership should join Fine Gael and be done with it. Secondly, I have a concern that this motion – I fully support this motion – but I have a concern that this motion won't amount to just a letter here and a deputation there and a press statement somewhere along the way and I think it is very, very important that there is a proper campaign of mobilisation. A proper campaign of lobbying and protest and that it is done and that it is vigorous and that we draw on a substantial portion of those 800,000 people because as every has pointed out, we are all in this together to ensure that this never happens again. And, lastly I would make the point that unions must never again show up for talks and willingly participate in talks where there is a Sword of Damocles over their head and where they take part in those talks and instead of taking their people out on the street and saying this is not a basis for talks, this is blackmail. Let's have collective bargaining in the future. Never again blackmail, thank you.

Aidan Kenny, TUI

President, delegates, Aidan Kenny, Teachers' Union of Ireland. Like our colleagues in UNITE and ASTI and IFUT, our members from the 1st of July are subject to the terms and conditions of the FEMPI legislation. Our union considers this legislation to be a draconian piece of legislation. It is anti-worker and anti-trade union. At this Congress we have discussed collective bargaining. At the fringe meeting this morning there was extensive details and

discussions given about collective bargaining and the International Labour Organisation and European Court of Justice. This legislation – there is no negotiation, there is no consultation, there is no collective bargaining. The Minister can exercise a Ministerial Order under Section 2(b) and issue a circular letter that changes the conditions of service of our members overnight. In addition the legislation cuts the pay of our members. It cuts the pay of previous members who have pensions but there is an anomaly in the circular letter that was issued already because under the Haddington Road proposal it stated that someone cannot get cut, the wages cannot be cut under €65,000. However, under the circular letter that was issued by the Department to bring in effect on the 1st of July, this legislation imposed on our members is saying that someone who is working on half the hours or job sharing but who's salary scale is above €65,000 and they are only earning 50% of that will be subject pro-rata to a cut. So that cutting someone's wages, 5.5% for someone who is earning under €65,000. Our union would urge Congress to accept this motion and consider that this legislation, leaving aside Haddington Road, leaving aside all the prior discussions and negotiations that happened, this legislation is something that the trade union movement has to challenge and has to work together united in opposing an employer having absolute rights to impose unilateral changes on the conditions of service of the workers. I urge you to support this motion.

Gerry Breslin, ASTI

Colleague, Gerry Breslin, ASTI. The FEMPI Act is a reality. Here it is – that is what is in our schools at the moment and I will give you an example of some of the things that were said here. Incremental progressions are suspended for all teachers comprehended by this circular for three years. And, to add insult it said this circular is without prejudice to any further measures that may be taken. That's an open book for them to inflict anything they want and if we allow this to stay in the legislation books we are doing a great disservice to every trade unionist in this country. It is, and this is not just about Haddington Road, it is about all future negotiations and I use the word negotiations very loosely because you cannot have proper negotiations with a thing like this hanging over your head. Now I just want to mention too that we know all the points regarding it and I know everybody here will be for this motion but I just want to make two points. When we say in the motion we must mount as vigorous and robust campaign. Now, I am looking here at the Executive Summary or Report from the Convention of two years ago and I give an example of the robust campaigns that were issued on some of the measures that were adopted two years ago. Congress continues to argue and campaign, Congress issued numerous statements and public comments... God save us, that will have them shivering in their boots. We make a few statements that we don't like this. The matter was raised with the Department of Education, wow. This has to be vigorous, it has to be strong. These emergency measures are used in war and this has to be war for all trade unionists and not just in the public sector, it will be in the private sector, it will affect everybody. Where were the people of principle when this legislation was going through the Dáil? Where were the trade unionists? Where were the workers' representatives? Now as a very first step I would like to see Congress putting on their website the names of all TDs from whatever party who supported this legislation so that we can lobby them and get on to them and tell them what we think. We have Fair Trade Hotels, we say we must support the hotels that support trade unions. We have Fair Trade Shops, we must support shops that support trade unions. May be it is time we had Fair Trade TDs who we only support if they support trade unionists. I ask you to support the motion.

Larry Broderick, IBOA

Larry Broderick, General Secretary IBOA, the Finance Union supporting the emergency resolution. I think it is fair colleagues to identify that at the last meeting of the Executive of Congress, a very robust and a very, very bitter discussion took place, a very profound discussion in relation to this issue. And I think it is fair to say that the outgoing Executive Council and certainly the incoming Executive Council see this as a priority issue. But we would

be misleading ourselves, colleagues, very fundamentally if we go back and look at this in the context of what has happened over the last number of months because this is not about Haddington Road or Croke Park. This legislation started in 2009 with the Credit Stabilisation Act when people in the banking industry were told that legislation would be brought in to stop their pay and terms and conditions of their employment. And of course all of us as trade unionists jumped up and down and withdrew the workplace in recognition of that. This has been happening over the last number of years and unfortunately colleagues, as we saw the discussion the other day in relation to the Commission, unless we as trade unionists stop kicking each other around the public media and undermining each other and focussing on sectional interests, and forgetting who we actually represent – the ordinary worker – we will be having loads of these resolutions and loads of these conversation over the next ten years. Now what is required from this conference is not bullshit, it is resolution. If we were all serious, we need to go back to our Executive Committees and tell them that this will mean pain. This will not be changed by a lobbying campaign or another protest. We have to actively and be serious about it. It will mean resources and will not mean threats and if we are serious in supporting this resolution, colleagues, we need to go from this conference, we need to be clear and get direction from the Executive and it is not just about Labour. Every one of the major political parties will hide behind this legislation. The reality as we speak, we are seeing in our industries and in other industries that employers are already preparing other type legislation or other type of approaches undermining the issues that's there. So the message should be very clear. There are lessons to be learnt. We need to revolutionise the movement, to get back to doing the basics. Forget the infighting colleagues – this is too serious – let's have a campaign of support but it will have to go beyond rhetoric. Support the resolution, thank you very much.

Padraig Mulholland, NIPSA

President, delegates, Padraig Mulholland, NIPSA to support the motion. There is still an echo of Jim Larkin I think in our movement. There is still some fight left in our movement and there is still some willingness to take on rotten Governments and stand up for working people and do our best for them. And I think comrades that we are facing a very significant fight over the next period of time. From listening to the speeches that have been made about this emergency legislation in the South of Ireland that has been put through, forgetting the parties, but has been put through by an anti-worker and anti-trade union Government, it is clear that we have to change direction and we have to say to that Government that we don't care who you are, we are not accepting attacks on our movement, we are not accepting attacks on the right to collective bargaining and we are not accepting attacks on workers. You are not getting away with this. And, I think comrades, we have to say to say the same in the North. We have had an Assembly now for a whole number of years and it is an Assembly that has a right to pass legislation on trade unions and on workers' rights but that Assembly sits on top of a heap of legislation that affects the trade union movement and affects trade union workers' rights that was originally put in place by Maggie Thatcher and the Tory Government twenty years ago. They have done nothing, nothing to get rid of that repressive legislation. Our MLAs, our Assembly has refused to act on those issues while at the same time preaching how they are on the side of workers and how they are on the side of trade unions and in fact it is always great to see us turning up to a meeting and stuff at Stormont. The reality is, both North and South, if we are to have a movement in to the future, if we are to have a purpose in this room then we have to rise, we have to be prepared to fight and we have to take on ant-trade union Governments North and South. And that is going to be a bitter pill to swallow. It is not going to be an easy thing to do. Twenty years of a failed strategy of partnership has lulled us into a sense that if you negotiate long enough it will all go away. I think that it is very clear that it is not going to go away. I think it is very clear that the Government in the South are going to continue to attack and attack and attack and when you don't lie down and take the kicking, they are going to bring in legislation that says we will kick you whether you like it or not. And

you are left with no choice but to fight. And in the North comrades, all the sweetness and light is not going to resolve the fundamental problems. There is a raft of anti-trade union legislation in the North of Ireland Assembly that is designed to break the back of trade unions, it is designed to cripple them, it is designed to stop them fighting back on behalf of workers and we as a movement have to grasp the nettle on this. We have to take this issue on and we have to fight the change that the legislation North and South. We have to say enough is enough, we are going to stand by our members, we are going to remember the spirit of Jim Larkin and we are going to act in that spirit and we are going to fight back on behalf of the working class. Support the motion.

Tom Geraghty, PSEU

Tom Geraghty, PSEU speaking in support of the motion and I think Jimmy Kelly summed it up very well that although we have come through a fairly bruising period and we are carrying a lot of wounds, I think we can unite behind the idea that this legislation needs to be repealed. Indeed those of us who advocated right from the get go the necessity to try and resolve the problem that faced us through an negotiated outcome did so in the certain knowledge that if we didn't succeed in that negotiated outcome we faced this sort of draconian legislation. While we can unite around and we need to unite around the question of seeking to have this legislation repealed, I think we also have to identify the mistakes that we made – and I am not exempting myself from that observation by the way – the mistakes we made in the process that led up to the circumstances in which we now find ourselves. And I would suggest that the first mistake that we made, and perhaps something we should bear in mind in the future, is that when Government tells us that they are going to introduce draconian legislation if we don't have a negotiated outcome and when they have the means to do that, we should start from the position that they probably mean it and we should build our strategy around that particular fact instead of trying to wish that fact away, because we have seen the situation that we have now found ourselves in when, unfortunately, we are incapable initially of putting together a package that was capable of being accepted by our members. We found that the very thing that we feared, the very thing that we sought to address in advance was imposed upon us. We are now in a circumstance where we are fighting to claw back something that we had sought initially to avoid and that is a much weaker position for us to be in.

Now as regards the legislation itself, I think it is fair comment to say that now as seems inevitable, all unions seek to put themselves under the umbrella of the Haddington Road Agreement, there is actually no necessity even from the employer's point of view to maintain this particular piece of legislation. After all, if the purpose of the legislation was to force people into the Haddington Road Agreement as a number of speakers have correctly identified, well that objective has now been achieved. And we should therefore set ourselves a target of seeking to have this legislation repealed over the lifetime of the Haddington Road Agreement. But I would have to say as well that that will not be achieved by engaging in empty rhetoric or by engaging in self-comforting sloganeering. That has no resonance with our members. We can all go away from here feeling an awful lot better for ourselves because we have had a good go but the reality of this is that the sort of change that we will now be seeking is something that will have to be done through sheer hard work, relentless effort on the part of the trade union leadership and this motion today gives us an opportunity to begin that process, thank you.

Jack O'Connor, SIPTU

President, delegates, Jack O'Connor, SIPTU supporting the motion and I agree entirely with what has been said by a number of speakers with regard to the danger that this legislation poses in the medium and longer-term. And that is why, delegates, that my own union's delegation at those talks fought and fought and fought for a sunset clause to be inserted in

such legislation should it ever come about. And that is why we thought that every delegation irrespective of what view they took on a possible agreement would be fighting to insist that such a sunset clause would be included in the legislation. Now the legislation is there and the question that we are faced with is as to how we go about removing it and I entirely agree with the speakers who have said that this will take a good deal more than walking around town. But the thing about it is, we have to approach it from the perspective of what can we do to bring about its removal because if walking around town is not a good idea, neither is walking one sixth of the workforce into a battle in which they would be faced with absolutely overwhelming odds and they will be overwhelming odds because it will be capable, it will be within the capability of the other side to spin it so that the other five sixths – 400,000 or more who have no job at all, 800,000 of whom have work have no occupational pensions at all whatsoever and two thirds of whom or almost two thirds of whom who have work have not entitlement to collective bargaining of any kind whatsoever other than to ask when the boss shouts ‘jump’, how high. It will be possible for them to spin those people against that one sixth – that is why the odds are awesome, that is why we took the view that it was better to fight a rear-guard strategy. And let’s face it comrades, one of the reasons why there are overwhelming odds is because we, thus far, five years into the most sustained assault against working people in the history of our State have not yet stepped up to the challenge or producing a trade union newspaper or trade union media even though it is as obvious as the nose on your face that it is an essential thing to do. But if we are going to walk people into battles we might as well equip them with a chance of winning and walking into battles without that kind of medium is like walking into a battle without an air force. And that is why we took the view in my own union, comrades, that the best strategy of all the people who work in the public service at the present time is to be united in one single agreement, not necessarily a great agreement, was the best thing to do because an injury to one, comrades, is still the concern of all and that is the only way we can succeed. Now, there are lots of dangers in this and we have to have a multi-faceted strategy to deal with it and, I will finish in a minute President, but one of the things that we should do as soon as we can and as soon as all unions that have to decide have decided, we should try to ensure that all these bi-lateral agreements are converted into a single agreement because there are other vulnerabilities in the situation which allows workers and unions and categories to played off one against the other and isolated. If there was one additional word, I wasn’t invited to participate in the drafting of the motion – I wonder why – but I wasn’t invited but if I was invited I would have added the word ‘intelligent’ before ‘robust and vigorous’ because we have to outthink the other side. And, one of the things is to get back to the place where we all are in one agreement because that means that we can apply the collective power of all the people who work in the public service in the negotiation. And, the real fear, let’s all be frank about it, the real fear and lets all be frank about it, the real fear is if this is left on the statue books after this Government goes and when Labour is not in the next Government partly incidentally thanks to our insistence on denying the reality that the Labour Party constitutes less than one third of the Government, and that came about because more than 60% of the people in the last General Election voted for the parties that guaranteed the rich that they would have to contribute nothing and if there was an election in the morning according to the polls, 60% of them would still vote that way, and the real fear, comrades, is thanks partly to us all Labour false strategy, we will end up with the Fine Gael Government or worse, the Fine Gael Government accompanied by the political party of the right which I suspect is in gestation at this very moment – the new PDs. And, they won’t worry about talking to us to warn us about the dangers of legislation before we have negotiations, they will just go and do it. Thank you.

Joe Roe, CPSU

Morning delegates, Joe Roe, CPSU speaking in favour of the motion. Our union overwhelmingly rejected Croke Park 1 by 87%, let’s get that into perspective. Croke Park was then defeated. The Government then took it upon themselves to bring forward legislation.

My members were therefore faced with the situation of either accepting Haddington Road or having FEMPI imposed on them. Comrades, in any democracy surely a vote should be accepted for what it is because otherwise you are going down the road of an atroposy. You are going into the area of a la carte legislating. This Government has a history of hitting the weak and the under-privileged, so delegates if we allow FEMPI to remain on the statue books, any future Government can do what they like to us. I am a civil servant and as from Monday my conditions of employment changed. I didn't agree to them, they were imposed on me. I agree with what Jack said by the way, we need to be intelligent in what we are doing. I will also be urging the Executive Council of ICTU to be looking at European law rather than Irish law because most of the progress we have made since we joined the EU has been from Europe. They must be a way of challenging this because otherwise, delegates, you can close down ICTU, you can closed down all unions because the Government will simply impose what they want without consultation. So, delegates, I am urging you and I am urging the new Executive Council of ICTU to fight this legislation with all its power because today it is the Civil and Public Service, tomorrow it will be the private sector. In fact, I believe some companies in the private sector have already moved to try and impose some of what is contained in FEMPI. Thank you delegates.

Frank Barry, UNITE

Good morning delegates, Frank Barry, UNITE speaking in support of the motion. I am a long time coming to conferences of this nature, ICTU, from when I was a young lad, in TAS when I was a young lad and when I stated of in TAS the battle was with the British Conservative Government called Mrs Thatcher and I listened to my colleagues in the UK saying we will have to use all the resources possible to get rid of this anti-union legislation that was imposed to defeat the Miners. I never thought for one moment I would stand on a platform of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and repeat that we must get rid of this draconian legislation. What would we do if we were in the workplace if the employer turned around with a baton and attacks us in the manner in which this Government has attacked us? We would walk out, we would have none of it and we would stop working until he or somebody forced him to change his mind. I don't want rhetoric, I agree with Jack, we don't want rhetoric and empty promises, letters – they ignore them – they put them in the bloody bin. We know that. Probably the most important thing for Congress to do today is to suspend all the motions we just passed, forget about them, they are not important. They are not important in the context of what this legislation is doing to workers and not just in the public sector but also will be applied in the private sector mark my words. We could spend the next five years being diverted, being diverted improving wages and conditions and still ending up with this legislation in the book. And, I am going to be quite honest about it. It is appalling. It is appalling that a member of the Labour Party and the Labour Party Deputies in the House support this legislation. The argument is, well if we weren't there it would be worse. Could it be much worse, ask yourselves, could it be much worse? If we were in France in Paris and I am sure you have watched the scenes on television day in day out, they fill the streets instantaneously when they disagree with their Governments. What is wrong with the Irish people? What is wrong with us? What is wrong with us as trade unionists that we won't get off our backsides and pack the streets of Dublin? Have we lost the will to live and fight for the conditions that are our forefathers fought for? This trade union movement set up way back in 1906 or whenever it was, when we established the Labour Party, when we put members into Parliament to fight for our causes, those people in Dáil Eireann today do not represent workers. I call on the Executive that we need a day of action. I have no problem with a day of action. Let us show our physical support for this legislation to be repealed. I ask you to support.

Shay Cody, IMPACT

Delegates, Shay Cody from IMPACT. First of all, I want to state that IMPACT will be supporting the motion and we need to work collectively to remove this legislation. The second thing is, I want to agree with Jack O'Connor's suggestion that we need to collectivise the agreements that we have. But we need to get beyond talking to ourselves. We need to analyse where we find ourselves because the strength of the trade union movement and the strength of the working class movement is always part of a balance of power and a balance of influence. And the truth is, and David Begg has made this point for many years, is that the world economy has changed since the collapse of communism and a massive influx of surplus labour into Western Europe from globalisation, our power has weakened. And for people who ever negotiated on behalf of workers in the private sector, FEMPI legislation is actually quite modest compared to what employers slash across the table and told us because the negotiation there isn't about freezing increments or cutting pay. I was personally involved in a negotiation where the employers said to 1,200 of our members, unless you accept this we will make you all redundant. Now that was not fair, people were entitled to be angry and we had awful, terrible internal discussions within our membership because some people said they don't mean it and other people went home and wept in front of their family because they saw the loss of their houses. And, that is the most awful situation for workers to find themselves in. We ended up getting through it, we wouldn't call their bluff. We didn't have the strength or the confidence to call that bluff and risk it because people were scared and frightened. And that's part of the balance of power because they are stronger than we are in that dynamic.

Now in the public service there is righteous indignation over the fact that not once, not twice, three times they have come knocking on our door and this legislation must be removed so that it doesn't facilitate the successors of this Government to come the fourth, the fifth and the sixth time but the solidarity of the trade union movement cannot just be within the confines of the public service because Jack is right on that point. When John Douglas's members had their terms and conditions removed in the retail sector did we have these emotional debates? I made the point during the private session that while we have gone through terrible times in the public service, have we assimilated the absolute catastrophe that is falling on our colleagues and comrades because of the setting aside of the JLCs and the REAs? Let's be honest with ourselves. Let's be honest and our slogan is 'an injury to one is a concern of all', but that applies to the entire workforce, private and public. Now we should rally together. We should, as we have promised and committee, have a discussion at the Congress Executive Council about all the fall-out of this and I welcome this motion because it gives a focus to it. It gives a common cause. But we have to have realistic solidarity right across the trade union movement. IMPACT supports, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Conference, we have had a very long and detailed debate on this matter. I am going to put it to the vote, is there anyone opposed to the motion? Can I take it that it is carried unanimously? Thank you.

Can I call on Jack McGinley, Chair of Standing Orders.

Jack McGinley, Chair of Standing Orders

Delegates, the final Standing Orders Report, Standing Orders have considered the situation and wish to advise conference that we should proceed to take Motions 35 to 42 to conclusion without a lunch break and at the conclusion of conference, an event will take place in front of the rostrum where tomorrow is the 65th birthday of the National Health Service and there is a request to ask the General Secretaries of the unions and Executive Council members and the health unions of Northern Ireland to pose for a photography and to sign a card which will go

to a special event in Stormont tomorrow posted by the Health Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly. I move.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Is that agreed? Thank you.

I call on the mover of Motion 35.

Brian Campfield, NIPSA

Vice President, I got the short straw coming after the previous motion. You are probably all exhausted. Conference, Brian Campfield from NIPSA to move Motion 35 and to start by saying that privatisation basically is the modern enclosure movement where private interests capture and steal common land and property and basically when it happened in England a few centuries ago people were basically expelled from their holdings. And, really in its modern form in the 20th/21st century is similar. It means private interests capturing ownership of public land, buildings, utilities, functions, public space and if it continues then there will be nothing held in common and everything that we do will be transactional and dictated by the market.

Congress, the motive for privatisation is not to reduce costs to the public. It is not to create more efficient services. It is to create further opportunities for increasing the rate of profit. In the past this was done by extracting profits through colonialism, slavery, war and expansion and sweated profits from reduced wages from workers. And in the 20th century the public money itself became a source of profit and Government contracts and subsidies. This phenomenal has been described as accumulation by dispossession and the people that are being dispossessed is you and I and all citizens. Capital, Conference, has an unquenchable thirst that can only be slayed by increased profits. And any barriers for obstacles to this forward march of capital and pursuit of this profit must be dismantled. That is the way it goes and that means the trade union movement as well because we are probably the only organisation or organised body which knows what privatisation really means. And that is why attacks on the trade union movement will continue. But when the flow of profit is slowed up or when the opportunities are reduced others have to be created and found and that is what basically the recent emphasis for privatisation represents. We have marketisation or privatisation in health, education, leisure services, prisons, waste, roads, telecommunications, electricity, gas, postal services, it is a profit bonanza, all with public money. The purpose of this motion, Conference, is to call privatisation what it is and to caution the trade union movement, to caution ourselves that we can't cooperate and we shouldn't cooperate with any privatisation whatsoever. Arguing, as some people do, that we have to conceded that certain services or utilities should be privatised in order to allow the capital to be invested as a stimulus for growth for jobs, I think is the wrong approach. I think it is a major mistake and we have to ensure that we don't get into the business of submitting to what is effectively economic blackmail and we should say that these functions, that these bases in our society, these services, these utilities belong to the public and that is the way it should remain. I ask you to support the motion.

John Douglas, Vice-President of Congress

Is there a seconder for the motion? Formally seconded, any speakers to the motion? Name and organisation please.

Roberta McGee, UNISON

Vice-President, delegates, Roberta McGee, UNISON supporting Motion 35 on the privatisation of domiciliary care. I have worked for the Belfast Trust and Homecare for twenty-seven years, first as a Home Help for a long time and then as a coordinator of staff.

So, a few years ago the private sector would have got about 70% mainly Friday teatime calls, may be bed calls, but the work was given to them as a last resort – only when we couldn't give it to anyone else. Today they have around 60% and they will get more and with the introduction of women workers there will be a reliance on the community and voluntary sector. In Belfast there are twenty-six private providers that work for the Belfast Trust. The times of calls have been slashed to about fifteen minutes, for example, to assist an elderly person of eighty years old or ninety or older than that with washing and dressing and making their breakfast. Delegates, this is not dignified. It is not even decent. In the public sector there is continuous monitoring of standards of care. This is not so in the private sector. It is to our union's credit that we remain to the forefront of resisting this ongoing political, departmental and health boards' drive to privatise essential services. We recently challenged the tendering process for homecare in the Western Trust as well as intervening in the Health & Social Care Board on the content and processes within that regional contract for homecare delivery by the private and independent sectors. So we call on all affiliates to support the motion and our campaign and this is how we intend to do it. We must return domiciliary care services in-house. Privatisation is never the way. And, we must continue to prioritise the organisation of homecare workers employed in the private sector providers to ensure fair terms and conditions of employment, and we must continue to lobby the Northern Ireland Executive and health bodies to ensure that staffing levels are increased and that standards of care are high. So, basically, this is a campaign about our members' jobs in the home help service but it is also more than that. It is a campaign about the treatment of people in our society who are entitled to live in the community and entitled to the best standard of care and support to enable them to have the quality of life they deserve. And, I will leave you with this, delegates, earlier in the week we were shown the average age of our members and that includes us. In five or ten years we will be the users of these services so we better get out and fight for them before there are none left. Please support the motion.

John Douglas, Vice-President of Congress

Any more speakers on Motion 35? Ok, I just want to put Motion 35 to the conference – all in favour of Motion 35, carried.

Motion 36, I call on Fermanagh Trades Council to move Motion 36.

John Martin, Fermanagh Trades Council

John Martin, Fermanagh Trades Council moving Motion 36. The motion sums it all up on how desperate politicians and the right-wing think-tanks and their allies in the media, how they are trying to divide generations in both the twenty-six counties and in Northern Ireland, by inferring that pensioners have escaped austerity measures at the expense of the younger generation. What of a load of 'you know what'. When I started working in the last century all the way back in the 60's, I always had a notion like a lot of people that we created the wealth of the country – the working people. So where did all that money go to? I don't know. The move from RPA to CPA that has in monetary terms a big impact on both the State pension and the company pension. Research has indicated that over a period of time up to £15 a pensioner could lose up to a figure of about £10,000 and that is a big loss. There is one austerity measure. There is more coming down the line – bus passes, subscriptions, free glasses and so on, enough said on those injustices. But where is the justice being meted out to the bankers and the speculators who got us all into the financial mess today and for the foreseeable future. Nothing but a big deafening silence by the Government. Finally, on behalf of all angry pensioners, I would say to those elites, politicians, movers and shakers and the like, and I am not going to swear but you are going to have to figure it out. Have a bit of sex and a bit of trauma. Please support.

John Douglas, Vice-President of Congress

Is there a seconder for that motion?

Hugh Rafferty, UNITE

Hugh Rafferty, UNITE Retired Members, Belfast branch. I am seconding this Motion 36 from Fermanagh Trades Council because my generation's workers strived and fought to ensure that all workplaces across Northern Ireland remained united throughout the Troubles. I could tell you horrid stories of what took place but that is for another time. We were glad to do it and we did it because we thought it was the right thing to do. I firmly believe in the old strategy of divide and conquer must not be facilitated by pointless conflict between generations of workers at a time of austerity. The sanity of those questioning austerity and those opposed to it are all victims of these attacks on our common welfare, our terms and conditions and a dignified retirement. Just as cynical politicians try to drive a wedge between the private sector workers and the public sector workers, the same people are now arguing that the rights fought for and won by our generation of workers are impacting on the younger workers in our society. As part of that generation of workers who helped to win a series of rights which are now under attack, it is only in recent years that we won such rights as paternity pay, health & safety regulations, equal pay and anti-discrimination and other rights. We understood that the pension we receive was not a gift from the young but was deferred wages. They were part of our terms and conditions of work. We did not earn these rights for our generation alone. We fought for them so that all generations could enjoy the same benefits on retirement. The development of the two-tier workforce which has stood between those who expect a proper retirement and those who are forced to go alone is a step which we are not prepared to accept. It stands therefore that older workers and retired workers speak up for the rights of young and the younger workers understand what is being stolen from them are the things which we fought for and fighting for still. We must retain these rights as they exist and we should fight for them when they are being taken away. Younger trade unionists can benefit for the experience of older comrades and remember the message of Larkin – that an injury to one is an injury to all and those inflicting those injuries are not our fellow workers. So, I urge Congress to support this motion, thank you.

John Douglas, Vice-President of Congress

Any other speakers to Motion 36? I am now going to put Motion 36 to the floor, all those in favour, carried.

Can I have Motion 37 in the name of the INMO please.

Clare Mahon, INMO

Clare Mahon, INMO. President, fellow delegates, this motion seeks that Congress would have as one of its main priorities the protection and maintenance of equality assured public health service which is a common social good. In recent times and even amongst ourselves, we have tended to focus too much of our attention on Ireland as an economy rather than as a society with a strong sense of community. Our public health service is now in its fifth year of severe contraction due to a reduction in its financial allocation. It has seen a 20% reduction in funding and a 9% reduction in staffing and I would ask you to note that the staffing reduction has seen a 14% reduction in nurses and midwives – that is almost 5,000 gone from the system – and a 10% reduction in support staff. This level of contraction in such a short space of time is unprecedented and it has not been replicated in any other OECD country. This contraction has been brought about not in the controlled and managed way but simply done through a blunt instrument of reduced allocations and most of all a recruitment ban or moratorium. And this has, is and will continue to cause real harm to patients and to the quality of care that they receive and it cannot be allowed to continue. Throughout this period, and during the lifetime of different Governments, there has been consistent and persistent denial of the impact of

these cuts on patients, on their return to full health and also the impact on staff working in our health system. All political parties have been guilty of spinning and misrepresenting the reality of what is now happening to our public health service and what is being experienced by ordinary people seeking care, care that they deserve and also what the staff are experiencing trying to provide that care.

Ten years ago the INMO commenced a daily trolley watch count. Now this count measures the number of patients admitted to a hospital through the emergency department but for whom there is not bed. They are therefore maintained in an emergency department on trollies or chairs and given a bed if and when one becomes available. Now it is true to say that over the last twelve months the trolley watch figure has been reducing. However, this is primarily because the health service has now started in a number of hospitals to routinely overcrowd in-patient wards by place extra beds on them. In view of this, we recently commenced another initiative, a ward watch. If you combine the figures of the ward watch and the trolley watch then you can see that the overcrowding involving the inappropriate placement of patients continues unabated. This dilutes care and compromises care and it is increasing the risk of hospital acquired illnesses through cross-infection and again it increases the workload of staff on the front line. It must also be noted that when we do comparative staffing figures as we recently completed one in the INMO, the Irish health care system, both in terms of overall staffing levels and skill mix, is significantly lower than comparable wards across the United Kingdom. In other words, colleagues, we are reducing staffing levels in a unilateral arbitrary way in an environment that is already poorly staffed by international standards. If this situation was not bad enough, delegates, under the Government policy the health service has to reduce its staffing levels further by approximately another 5,000 between now and 2014. Now throughout this period the Government has been focussing on reducing staffing costs as if they are a burden by paying lip service to other areas of expenditure, for example the cost of drugs in the Irish health service. This year there is a plan to spend €1.9 bn on drugs that would cost 33% less in other countries. One has to assume the Irish Government's willingness to facilitate super profits for drug companies is because of external pressures but this is no justification to close 2,500 beds, cut staffing which leads to a delay in access to care while paying exorbitant prices to drug companies that already have huge profits. While insisting on this severe contraction to our health service, the Government is also focussed on a forth way of organisational reform within the past ten years. There is no doubt that the HSE has failed and has become a centralised bureaucracy but organisational reform of itself will not address the existing deficits and shortcomings to our health services. The only thing that matters to any patient and their families is whether I am being looked after by the right person in the right place, at the right time and the right environment and anything else is irrelevant to the patient and the front line staff. This motion seeks that Congress will use every means it has to articulate on the behalf of every member and citizen and their families the need for Government to resource our health service properly ensuring that we have a society that we want to live in and not just an economy where we are required to exist. I urge you to please support this motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Secunder?

Geraldine Talty, INMO

Geraldine Talty seconding the motion. President and delegates, in seconding this motion there are further areas that as a Congress we need to be aware of and be strong in our policies and public statements. The first of these is the continuing and persisting efforts to privatise and outsource central aspects of our public health service. This is particularly rampant in the area of caring for the older person which I would remind you we will all be at some time. I do not care whether I live in Boston, Ireland or Berlin but once you introduce the profit motive into

health care you immediately introduce tensions with regard to providing high quality care. There will always be the pressure to reduce staffing levels, lower skill mix arrangements and even compromise on dietary needs and therapy services when they impact upon the bottom line. The best guardian of high quality health care is public provision which is subject to rigorous, continuous and unyielding independent audit but the pressure at the moment is certainly to privatise or outsource at every opportunity, and Congress must oppose this growing trend. In enhancing our participation as a Congress in the public debate about our health service we must also be mindful of the Government policy towards universal health insurance. There is no doubt that a single tiered public health service which only determines access is our preferred model and certainly our current two and three tiered system is grossly unfair. However, as I acknowledge the work of our sister union, IMPACT, in this area a move to universal health insurance is not an automatic panacea to an inadequate health service. Every individual level of cover in a health insurance model must provide a wide range of services, free at the point of access, and it is far from clear that this will emerge from the current Government thinking in this area. We must watch this space, be vigilant and be forthright in demanding a final funding model which looks after everyone and treats everyone equally. President and delegates, the Irish public health service is not as some commentators and politicians would state, a black hole into which billions of tax payers money has been poured and wasted. Our health service and the 100,000 staff working in it perform miracles every day as they strive to look after the people in need of their care and attention. The moral of staff in our health service after five years of constant cuts, contraction and increasing demand is very low and their concerns for the service in which they work and we work has never been greater. This motion asks Congress, even in the heat of all the debate about our economy, not to forget that the provision of adequate and safe public services, in this case health, is as important as anything else we have and need at this time. We must seek this independent chaired health summit which will examine the totality of our spend, our cost base and our models of delivery and we must seek this immediately. Colleagues, all of us need the health service at some time. Perhaps sooner rather than later so we must collectively come together and unapologetically and assertively demand that current Government policy be reversed as it is leading to the destruction of an essential element of a civilised society. I urge you to support the motion, thank you.

Kevin McCabe, NIPSA

President, Congress, Kevin McCabe speaking in support of Motion 37 on behalf of the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance. Delegates, our health and social care systems, North and South, have and continue to be under attack from respective coalition Governments who are intent on pursuing what we describe as a 'Sato Monetarist' short-term policy that uses the cloak of austerity to slash service provision, promote privatisation and ultimately will compound our health and inequalities. And we see this being characterised, North and South by constant change. Change to service level provision, terms and conditions changes, death by change. We see contraction, we see cut-backs, we see rationalisation, we see recruitment freezes, we see an inappropriate skills mix being promoted, we see a move from the acute to community care, we see resultant privatisation whether that is through PFI – Public Private Partnerships - a health system which is systematically being eroded over the years. We also witness procurement and privatisation dressed up as value for money initiatives. All run the risks of assets stripping. The framework of knowledge skills and the ethos of the public service that is defying the health and social care workforce replacing key sections in a profit driven race to the bottom. Congress, only the public sector represents an essential bulwark against the continuing financial crisis and the impact of the economic downturn. Public employment and services act as an anchor in maintaining social and economic stability and cuts in the public sector will have a negative impact on key social objectives not least health and inequalities. Now, I know the next motion deals with that subject in its own right but again it is a fact that almost every social problem common in developed societies be that reduced life expectancy,

child mortality, drug abuse, crime, homicide rates, mental illness, obesity – all have a single cause which is inequality. So I want you to support Motion 37 and the associated motions because to go back, it is about the public sector who will represent the essential bulwark against continuing financial crises and the impact of economic downturn. I ask you to support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Kevin. Any other speakers? Motion 37, those in favour, carried.

Motion 38, Austerity, Privatisation and Health Inequality standing in the name of UNISON.

Anne Speed, UNISON

President, delegates and friends. UNISON would like to share with you some of our experiences in dealing with the complexity and bureaucratic nature of the health and social care system in Northern Ireland and how we have been trying to fight to defend the NHS and I do hope that the incoming Executive Council and all the General Secretaries of the unions will join with us in signing the birthday card saying happy birthday to the NHS from trade union workers on the front line, so I look forward to that. Since 2008, the decision making process in health and social services have been made so complex and obscure in order to disguise the real privatisation agenda and confuse the public here. Sham public consultations are a cynical ploy to get public consent for decisions that have already been taken. However, the real decisions and their drastic impact are being kept under wraps so it is worth looking at how the game is being played. Every year there is a departmental memorandum on health and social care targets. A Health and Social Care Board public agency joint commission plan and Trust delivery plans and we have to wade through thousands and thousands of pages. These are all meant to give day to day direction to the delivery of health and social care but they have never been subjected to an effective equality process. In the past two years in my experience we have seen increasingly unaccountable initiatives taken in the health care service that include the McKenzie and Co Report which sets the privatisation cuts agenda, the Compton Review and the latest magic plan called Transforming your Care, or as we in the health unions like to call it, Transferring your Cash, as well as local population plans produced by a private consultancy firm at a cost of £9 m. Now this frenzy of activity is all designed for one outcome – to implement UK and Northern Ireland budget cuts up to the year 2017. The main vehicle for delivering them is mass cuts to NHS health and social care and transform them to the private sector. Now a recent report of a Trust in England, the Nuffield Trust, demonstrated that all Trusts who deliver services and treatment in-house rather than exporting patients to private service providers are substantially more efficient and more effective yet instead of building up in-house capacity through the recruitment of consultants and related grade posts at all levels, the response to waiting lists here has been to send people to private providers such as 3 5 2 and indeed private providers in Mullingar in the Republic, run by a former consultant of the National Health Service in Northern Ireland. These private services are being offered by the same medical staff who are on the current NHS payroll and who have been responsible for managing the growing waiting list initially. This is effectively double counting expenditure within the budget. Now we know all this kind of thing is happening in the health service south of the border as well. Analysis of published Trust Board minutes here show that public transparent and accountable boards oversight of the volume and nature of work referred to the private sector so we are able to find out from these minutes what exactly has been happening but it raises real issues of accountability and conflict of interest for Trust employment relationships with the consultants. The privatisation agenda was recently forced into the public domain by the coverage of the proposed closure of the NHS residential homes and we have heard about that in the debate and we have also listened to the stories of the growing privatisation of domiciliary care. We are absolutely clear that there is evidence that point to the emergence unfortunately of an NHS which has a reduced capacity to treat and to

care. This has very serious consequences for people here. The statistics on life expectancy and inequality are devastating and my colleague who will follow me will share some of them with you. Now we believe that the Northern Ireland Executive must examine current trends, must place a block on further private sector allocation and we were pleased to see a motion passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly recently moved by Conal McDevitt of the SDLP demanding public debate on any further privatisation and we have also heard stories that some other politicians intend to ignore it. We want to see waiting times reduced and we want to restore direct control and accountability which will be required to meet the entirety of recommendations for example the Mid Staffordshire Francis Report.

The Northern Ireland Executive must also ensure that fundamental human rights of the poorest and the most vulnerable are protected and that statutory obligations to promote the equality of opportunity on the basis of objective need and forms the basis of all their policy decision and decision making at all levels. These were the promises in the Good Friday Agreement and we talked about the 15th anniversary of that international agreement. UNISON and our other allies in the health sector will continue to mount the challenge, political, legal and take trade union action to make sure these promises are secured. I move the motion, thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Anne. Seconder for the motion?

Thomas Mahaffey, UNISON

President, delegates, Thomas Mahaffey from UNISON seconding the motion. Fifteen years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, the working class have been betrayed. The greatest expression of that betrayal is the very right to life itself. Life expectancy for working class people from areas of greatest disadvantaged in Northern Ireland has dropped since our peace agreement was signed. Our suicide rates are soaring. This means that our people are now dying at a faster rate in the peace process than they were when conflict was raging. In 2001 we saw the real extent of health inequalities for the first time. In response the new devolved Government prioritised health in the programme for Government and produced a strategic plan 'Investing for Health', with a series of radical and wide-ranging social and economic objectives. We believe back then that we were on the road to a genuine public health system and with real cooperation across Government on a strategic programme involving human rights at its heart. The cooperation never happened. Equality and human rights were side-lined. There was no whole system approach. Instead of a forensic analysis of why Investing for Health failed and who was accountable, we now have a new and water downed plan for a public health strategy. Our challenge to Government is to openly explain why health inequality is growing faster rather than diminishing. As Anne and many speakers before her have said, they are taking place in the context of an Northern Ireland health and social care system under attack. We should now be in no doubt that the current health structures are actively working against the interests of the people in Northern Ireland and have opened the door for the privatisation agenda and are capable of destroying our NHS. A fundamental shift in focus is required now. Any true public health strategy to turn the situation around will require implementation of the six key principles set out in the public health motion to NIC Conference last year. It must provide the building blocks to address the systemic change needed to Government and public sector decision making structures. It must address the fundamental issue of resource allocation in key areas such as health, education, housing and welfare to effectively tackle health inequalities and the social and economic inequalities which make them possible. It must ensure that the fundamental human rights of the poorest and most vulnerable are protected and the Government statutory obligation to promote equality of opportunity on the basis of objective need inform the basis of quality and decision making at all levels of Governments. As Anne has said, these were the promises of the Good Friday Agreement, please support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Thomas. Any other speakers?

I put Motion 38 to the floor, those in favour, those against, agreed, thank you.

We move to Motion 39, Funding for Health Care and Primary Care standing in the name of the IMO.

Anthony Ownes, IMO

Good morning President and delegates. My name is Anthony Ownes and I am from the Irish Medical Organisation, yes that Irish Medical Organisation! In launching the 'Healthy Ireland' document in March of just gone, the Minister for Health, Dr James Reilly observed the current generation of Irish parents are in danger of becoming the first generation to bury their children. Now this fear is borne out by research conducted by Temple Street Children's Hospital in Dublin which indicates that there are almost half a million overweight or obese children under sixteen years of age in Ireland – that is 32% of the total child population and places Ireland in 5th place in the EU27 in terms of childhood obesity. Now the scale of the problem is therefore evident but as Dr Sinead Murphy of Temple Street Hospital advised the Joint Oireachtas Committee overseeing this area, State expenditure in treating this obesity pandemic and I quote; "close to zero". The cost of treating chronic disease arising out of childhood obesity runs to almost €5,000 per annum per child. However, the cost of an effective weight reduction programmes in this area is approximately €600 per annum per child. Not alone is treatment is better than cure but it is more cost effective in the short, medium and especially long-term. Now with this in mind, Healthy Ireland's emphasis on launching a whole of Government approach to tackling the various population health issues affecting the population is to be commended. The Government should also be commended for thinking creatively and linking the built environment to leisure activities and on to health. However, the construction of cycle paths while very welcome is no substitute for a properly resourced and integrated public accounts strategy. In fact, I would contend that the hope that lifestyle factors alone would improve the health of a nation is akin to performing surgery with only a scissors and some bandages and good intentions. In this context and forewarned of its potential costs in both human and financial terms, the overall health budget including capital spending in the Republic has fallen over 12% since 2009. Over the course of a twenty year period starting in 2001, it is likely that the health spending in Ireland will come to resemble the classic bow curve. This has been evidenced by the Department of Health's own contributions to the 2011 expenditure review which spoke about reducing the budget of approximately twelve and a bit billion by 2014, at which point the total number of staff in the health service would have been reduced to 98,500 or 3,000 less than it was at the end of last year and a reduction in the current year allowing for growth miscalculations. Last year it was about €700 m. Yet, delegates, this is all in the name of false economy. This has been politically recognised by the Department itself. For those of these children who I mentioned earlier, we are in a position now where we must spend €5,000 per annum rather than sensibly investing €600 per annum. We know that some procedures, minor surgeries for example, cost twice as much in the already overcrowded, overstretched hospital setting as they do in the community setting, yet there is little investment or little incentive to transfer these procedures to community based specialist positions. We know the vaccination programmes will save money in the long run yet the community medicine budgets are reduced. We know because surveys have told us that general practice is likely to be the most efficient and effective part of the health service, likely that most patients are sent to, yet its resource supports are cut. The most recent were cut this very week and it might interest the conference that this week was the fourth FEMPI process in which GPs have been involved. While this is ongoing, additional hospital workload is transferred to general practise without any thought for the patient or the

doctor whose workload continues to ever more overtake their ability to deliver best patient care. All the while patients continue to sit in trollies and doctors continue to move abroad to continue their careers in health systems that aren't governed by the economics of the instance where sixty hour weeks are not the norm and where contracts are more than mere words on a page. Now all of this has been done in the name of dragging the deficit to 3% of GDP by 2015. It is presently around 12.5%. Now economic growth might, might take care of some of that reduction but along this path further cutbacks are inevitable. These cutbacks would come and so what if half of Irish adults are obese and in need of chronic care in 2030.

The Irish Government needs to stop thinking of five minutes down the road in terms of health policy. Yes, the economy might get fixed and again it is a might but at what cost? It will be a scandal for the ages if the economy was fixed at the cost of the health of the Irish people. It is imperative that the Irish Government reverse course and invest in our health service and in the future health of the Irish people. It is imperative that the Irish Government devise a health policy not a position paper and slogans as empty as shut wards. It is absolutely vital that the Irish Government design and resource a health policy that is not so overtly and unambiguously hostile to the members of the medical profession, so hostile in fact that some hospitals have become so under-staffed of these vital professions as to be barely safe places for patients. This will become very evident next week at the next non-consultant hospital doctor change-over.

Finally, it is imperative that the Irish Government follow their own logic and place the goal of a healthy Ireland at the centre of their policymaking and not allow the coming generation to be a captive of the needs to slavishly adhere to targets of the Troika. I commend the motion and ask your support.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you. Seconded, formally, thank you. Any speakers? I put the motion to conference, those in favour, that's carried, thank you.

Before I move on to the next motion, can I just advise Shirley Coulter from IMO that she is the fortunate winner of the iPad Mini from Halligan Insurance. And Martin Malone from the DCC has won the Cornmarket iPhone 5.

Can we move on now to Motion No. 40, standing in the name of the Cork Council of Trade Unions. Before you begin, can I ask you if you accept the amendment that is proposed? That's fine, thank you.

Colm Cronin, Cork Council of Trade Unions

This motion seeks to address the concerns amongst affiliates on the growing exclusion of ICTU nominees to State Boards. The practice of placing workers and Worker Directors on the boards of semi-state companies in Ireland was brought forward by then Minister for Labour, Michael O'Leary in 1977. He believed that the proposal would improve participation and make better use of workers' knowledge and ideas and skills in company decisions. The Worker Participation Act of 1977/78, which allows for Worker Directors nominated by trade unions or elected by employees is confined to State owned companies. Dublin Airport Authority, An Post, ESB, RTE, the National Disability Authority and Dublin Port are among the semi-state and State agencies where Worker Directors assume roles in company boards. Even the Ceann Comhairle, Sean Barrett stated last year that the move towards greater privatisation in the semi-state companies should not be reason to overlook the value of Worker Directors on these boards. Moreover, he said that he emphasised the notion of workers bringing advice and knowledge from the shop floor could only be a benefit to the wider company.

In 2012, the independent think-tank, TASC, found that the vast majority of ordinary directors in the semi-state firms considered Worker Directors to be loyal to their company and trustworthy and diligent. Their contributions reviewed have been positive and unique. In adopting this motion, Congress must take into consideration this vital report by TASC that was commissioned by the National Worker Director Group and recommends the following: The practice of appointing Worker Directors to be extended across the public sector. That mandatory training be given to Worker Directors in order to improve the workings of the board. A skills audit should be held and independent directors applying on the basis of skills and experience. There should be at least 25% worker representation on the boards to avoid isolation. Workers be better informed of the role and obligations of the Worker Directors at election time in order to ensure that they do not face unrealistic or unreasonable expectations. Delegates, the current practice by various Government Ministers of removal of union representation on State boards is yet again another manifestation of the weakening of our democracy. It is a reflection of the current political climate which is both anti-union and anti-worker. More importantly, the removal of worker representation on State boards itself curves with the destruction of social dialogue and working conditions of those working in the companies. Without worker representation, trade unions and their members are left wide open to attack and exploitation. I urge delegates to support this motion, continue our fight for the voice of workers to be heard loud and clear in every workplace, every city, town in this country.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Seconder, formally, thank you. Speakers? No. Ok, we are taking a vote on the amended motion, those in favour please show, that is carried, thank you.

Moving on to Motion No 41 standing in the name of the PSEU on Worker Directors on State Boards.

Tom Geraghty, PSEU

Tom Geraghty, PSEU. You will be glad to know Chair that it is late and I know that people want to go home so I will be very brief. The only point that I want to make, and this is not a reflection on the Standing Orders Committee, but the placing of this particular item on the agenda actually reflects how little priority this movement gives to this issue. We spent the last few days discussing very eloquently how little regard employers and Government have for workers in terms of the issues that affect their lives, but something as important as this where workers have an opportunity to be involved in the governance of the organisations for whom they work, is something that we as a trade union movement frankly neglect. The purpose of putting this motion down the agenda was to highlight the fact that in circumstances of this time where employers and Government are so inclined to disregard the interests of workers, it is of vital importance that we afford some priority to ensuring that we have workers on the boards of the organisations for whom they work. I could speak at considerable length about the issue but it is late and I commend the motion to you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks very much Tom. Seconded? Formally, thank you. Speakers? Those in favour please show, motion agreed.

Motion 42, Investment in Education, standing in the name of the INTO.

Brendan O'Sullivan, INTO

Delegates, I can ask your indulgence just to speak for a moment to this motion. I know it is late but it's just that the Minister for Education in the South has indicated very clearly and very publically recently that he intends to attack class size in the next budget and I need to make a formal and equally clear statement of intent on behalf of the INTO as to what our response will be to that.

Delegates, within a stone's throw of this building there are children regularly in classes over thirty and squeezed into those classes and this in some of the most acutely disadvantaged areas in this city. In the Republic there are 100,000 children in classes of over thirty. Now these are not educational problems. There are no educational arguments which suggest or which explain why children on this island should be in the most overcrowded classes in Europe. Just as there are no educational arguments which tell us why children with special needs should be robbed of what they need, the resources they need, to partake in mainstream schooling. These aren't educational arguments, these are economic and financial decisions and they are decisions which are choices made by Governments and it is shameful and it is very conscious that Government should choose to balance the books at the expense of the vulnerable and the needy at the same time as calling for tax cuts for the elites and also for reductions in corporation tax. It is shameful for a Government to make that choice and choice it is. Martin McGuinness told us yesterday that he shared the ideals of and the aspirations of the trade union movement and ok, I accept that perhaps he does, but it takes more than words. We are tired of words, words are very easy. The education budget in Northern Ireland continues to be reduced at a time when we are spending millions supporting the bureaucracy of seven different educational authorities – that is insane. Down South we have a Minister who has just come from an attack on special needs children and has explicitly signalled his intention to visit the cuts that he needs on children in mainstream classes and he is coming to us once again, Minister Quinn, with his hand clutching his bleeding heart telling us that this is the only way it can be done, this is how it has to be. Well, delegates, this is not how it has to be. You know it and I know it and he should know it as a Labour Minister. He could impose a third level of tax if only at the level of 45%, that would bring in €210 m. Wealth tax of the order that used to be in the Republic in 1974 would bring in €200 m. And they aren't the only options. He could impose a financial transaction tax. He could insist that the corporations who pay a very low rate of taxation pay it to the full limit of what they are supposed to pay. But he has chosen not to do those things and it is simply not credible for somebody like him to come and say that this is the only way. Now, I want to say to the Minister there are other options and you have chosen to take the options you have chosen. And I want to make it clear to Minister Quinn that INTO will be organising a campaign through August, through September and right up to the budget to defend cuts against in primary education, particularly in relation to class size, and I want to say to him that we will be mobilising parents in defence of that and we will vocal in setting up the alternatives and we will, Minister Quinn, judge you by what you do and not by what you say you would like to do, which is constantly what we get from him. And if the best you can offer us is a role as the ineffectual soft conscience of a right-wing party then I don't care whether you have the title Labour in your party name or not, it doesn't matter, it is a waste of space for any of us who are listening to that. Thank you delegates for listening. We will be watching the Minister. We will be responding to what he does and we will remember when it comes to election time who did it to us.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Seconder, formally, speakers?

Noeleen Beattie, UNISON

President, delegates, Noeleen Beattie, UNISON supporting Motion 42. The failure to reach a political agreement in the reorganisation of education has had serious consequences for the funding of all pre-school, primary and secondary education in Northern Ireland. The impact of that political failure is now thrown into stark reality by the cut in the Department of Education's budget. The problems caused by underfunding is accompanied by a falling birth rate, empty schools and continued party political wrangling over selection and the promotion of equality of opportunity for all of our children. We have both the best and the worst standards in education attainment in this island. The crucial issue is an estimated £300 m shortfall and ongoing 15% cut in the budget of every school. The result will be worse later outcome, increased educational inequality, a school state that is not fit for the 21st century and not fit for the purpose which it is set out to be and the dissemination of funding for school means, special needs and other vulnerable groups. Proper funding for our schools, the protection of jobs and the promotion of equality of opportunity for all of our children are essential if we are to redress historic disadvantage and deliver education systems that are fit for the 21st century, please support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you.

John MacGabhann, TUI

President, John MacGabhann, Teachers' Union of Ireland. I rise to support the motion in the name of the INTO. I also wish to make sure that it is clearly understood that as I have no doubt our primary level colleagues intend that it would be understood, that the motion doesn't imply a competition for resources between the different sectors of education. Education is a continuum starting in the pre-primary and continuing increasingly through to third level so I know there is no inference to be drawn from the motion that somehow the purse of Paul can be floundered to pay Peter. I know that not to be the intention.

I just want to say in respect of post-primary that at the heart of investment is the linked issue of quality. Investment simply without control, without accountability quite frankly is wrong. Public funds when they are used should be used to maximum effect. Therefore, when we are calling for investment we are taking it upon ourselves that there will be accountability in respect of how that investment is expended. We are also, and I think sometimes we are a bit shy about this, we are also taking it if you like as a bound and responsibility of ours to make sure that each and every child in each and every school at whatever level, in whatever part of the country, is afforded the very, very best possible education – an education of the highest quality – that is not compromised at all because the child happens to come from a socio-economic background that is less privileged. That is not compromised at all because the child has what in some respects might be a different set of abilities. That is not compromised at all because the child is an international student whose parents perhaps do not have English as a mother tongue. That is not compromised at all because the child happens to have emotional or behavioural difficulties that the system somehow wishes to brush aside or not brush aside but uses an excuse for not providing that child with the very best the system should provide. We owe it to all of our citizens, young and old, to make sure on behalf of parents that the young are looked after.

In respect, I will only use one statistic, one single point about third level. In the past four years third level education in the South – I make absolutely no distinction that this point between the universities and the institute of technology sector – has experienced a rise in the region of 15% in student numbers. It has simultaneously experienced a decrease in the region of 8% in headcount in academic numbers. Now, we were enjoying the various points by the Minister, by several Ministers to do more with less and sometimes that is possible, but there comes a

point beyond which you do less with less. You get lesser quality the less you invest. So we are at that tipping point. We are perhaps beyond it. It is critical for all of us, all of us as adults who collectively care for all of our younger citizens and for the future that they represent for our country and for the protection that their education will provide to us in our dotage - and some of us like myself are there already – that protection is provided at least in part by providing our young people with an ability to spread their wings in whatever way they wish and fly in whatever direction they wish as young adults. Education is vital to them for that. I would ask you to support the motion and go back to my initial point – this is not a question of pinching from one to pay for the other – pay for the continual.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you John.

Helena McSherry, NIPSA

Helena McSherry, NIPSA supporting this motion. Yesterday the Deputy First Minister stood at this podium and he is a previous Education Minister here and he had the audacity to say that bankers were laughing while people were suffering here. That is the pot calling the kettle black. He and his Government here in the North and also the Government in the South are imposing cuts while your children and pupils suffer. Remember, they are the future of this island, they will be choosing our old people's homes and the Assembly's old people's homes if they are still here. Year on year children with special needs suffer and so do their classmates and staff with those children. As the Government removed the support to the reduction and removal of Special Needs Assistance, yesterday a fortnight ago in Dublin the Classroom Assistance proudly marched with parents and teachers and pupils to protest about this. Let me tell you Education Minister here, we will be doing likewise. We have our own Haddington Road education proposal at the moment and it is called the DESA Bill. There are approximately 1,200 schools here in the North and they are proposing in this bill to change the terms and conditions of staff. Each school could have their own terms and conditions. Lucky for us here, all the unions in education both teaching and non-teaching, are fully in support of not accepting this. We are completely opposed to it and let me tell the Education Minister and the committee – if they go ahead with it we will take whatever action necessary and it will not just be the people in Egypt on the streets, we here in Northern Ireland will be on the streets too. Fully support the motion.

John Devlin, NASUWT

John Devlin, NASUWT. This particular motion, I know it specifically talks about primary level, but we support investment in education per say right across the board. Recently we are being asked in our educational world to continue to deliver and go beyond having a five star education system but increasingly that is with a two star budget and dropping all the time. Quality education requires quality investment full stop. What worries me is that as this financial pressure is deployed, the attack is moving across to our most vulnerable parts of our system. Special education and increasingly I am finding as well on our support staff in schools. We need our support staff in schools to be able to deliver at the frontline and it really, really worries me. I was in a school very recently and the next thing I was surrounded not by the teachers but actually by members of the support staff complaining about the fact that a very small amount of money that they should have received - £250 – had been denied to them. It was being delayed. That is not acceptable and I am glad to say that is where we are at in the teachers unions where maybe there is an organisation within some of our schools, that is where they need to come to us in the teachers' unions to be able to help them.

In the last two points – k) and l) in the motion – can I just touch upon the fact they talk about schools curricula being narrowed, there are some terrible things happening across in England where Mr Gove that famous Education Minister, he has decided that there are certain subjects

that are more important than others and the result of that in schools is that those are the subjects that are taught. The curriculum is being narrowed. That is not acceptable. Education should be there in its broadest terms and should be enable pupils in those schools to be able to do whatever subjects they need. We also have the accountability regime putting schools in competition with each other and that is obviously having an effect. Schools are allowed to grow to the detriment of others and usually these are in areas of the lowest socio-economic class are actually living in poor housing etc.

So, finally colleagues, I ask you to support this motion because if we do not keep an eye on this, the investment that is going into education is just constantly just being chipped and chipped and chipped away. Please support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Can I just point out conference these are the last two speakers to this motion.

Gerry Breslin, ASTI

Gerry Breslin, ASTI and like some of the previous speakers I feel that this motion really applies to all levels not just primary level in the question of investment. We do agree, of course, and I know that it is important that pre-school at all levels and we worry about pre-school in this country because it is in private industry and that is another matter. I just want to deal with two particular points here and that is point c) and point l) in relation to special needs and the lack of funding and reduction in funding. People could be mistaken recently for thinking that this was only a matter which did affect primary level but it is a serious issue for second level and for third level. It is a problem for all levels of education. The constant attacks on the most vulnerable students and not just people with special education needs. You also have Traveller children, immigrant children, all the resources that were there for them are being cut and cut and cut. This is an injustice, it should not be allowed to happen. Cutbacks in special needs education indeed affect all students as a lack of support for students with special education needs will lead to what should be an educational issue becoming a behavioural issue for class teachers. Class teachers with increasingly larger classes will end up losing class time with all students because behavioural issues of students with special education needs and this leads to further difficulties with every student. It is unfair on teachers, and it is unfair on all students in our schools and most particularly those with special education needs. And, in the middle of all this I read this morning that the Minister now wants to increase the pupil teacher ratio again. We have one of the highest pupil teacher ratios if not the highest in the OECD. How dare he? I have a firm belief that the people who are making the decisions on behalf of our schools have no idea how schools operate on a day to day basis. The changes that have taken place in schools over the last five or six years, the cut-backs, have made the life of teachers nearly beyond the beyond. The spare time is all gone and they are driving out things like the volunteerism that teachers were renowned for because they don't have the time.

I want to refer briefly to the aspect of consultation. The Minister introduced major reforms in the junior cycle and I firmly believe that there are some quite good points in it but there are a lot of areas where we have serious worries and I would say to people here who have children at primary school and at early years at secondary school, familiarise yourself with what is involved in that. There was a complete lack or nearly complete lack of consultation with professionals involved when this was being devised. The OECD itself has said that policy makers should actively engage the stakeholders, especially teachers, when bringing about reform and the need to develop more realistic expectations. We have serious worries about the reform that is coming down with regard to equity, in regard to standards and funding and assessment. A similar type of thing was brought in in Scotland recently, just a few years behind us, they are ahead of actually sorry, and now they are already talking about going on strike because of the lack of funding, lack of proper planning for this. So, I would say to

you familiarise yourself with what is involved here. The Government and the Department of Education tour the country talking to parents, talking to management but the only people they won't talk to and definitely will not listen to are teachers – the people that matter. The Minister has said that the train has left the station and this. Well, I say to the Minister the train may have left the station but the teachers are not on the train. I support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

I am calling the last speaker. If you want to speak to the section of the report, well it's contained in the section, ok.

Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council

President, Paddy Mackell, Belfast Trades Council to speak in support of Motion 42 and can I also just before I start, thank the President for providing a smaller mic here for anyone here who is a wheelchair user following the discussion yesterday and I thank him for that. It wasn't used but the intention was there.

In terms of this motion, there are a number of things that strike me about investment in education as the motion is headed, and you look at types of attacks that have been occurring over the last while back both North and South. And, you have had your own discussions in the South recently about providing for teachers and teachers' assistants and we also have that issue in the North as well. It strikes me as a society that there is nothing says more about it about how our politicians treat the most vulnerable and is there anyone more vulnerable than special educational needs. I think it is disgrace that that group of people have no voice for themselves. And I suppose the important point of that is that it shows the relevance of the trade union movement because we are the people who speak on behalf of those most vulnerable because they don't have anybody else. And when you look at the decisions that have been taken, I mean there is a simple thing that has happened in the North in terms of Classroom Assistants who are special needs Classroom Assistants and their hours are being reduced to save may a pound or a pound fifty an hour somewhere during the day so that rather than getting paid a full week at the proper rate for the job, they get pay a lesser rate for certain hours during that day. That is penny pinching in the extreme and it is not about providing proper education, it is about saving a few bucks. And this is where it comes down to political decisions and political realities. When you make a decision, a political decision, to cut education, special education needs and the hourly rate of Classroom Assistants, you make the political decision. Now you contrast that political decision to spend £50 m on redundancy payments for teachers and non-teaching staff – that is a political decision. Do you think it is better to put £50 m aside to pay people off rather than invest in education, there is something screwed up on that logic. So, from our perspective what we would say is another thing and I will get it out there because we are here, there is a thing happening – an area plan review of schools in the North and it is reviewing all 1,250 schools. Now, there are particular issues around school provision in the North given the make-up of the sectarian society. However, the decisions that are taken on area plans should only be based on the educational needs and provision of the children within those schools and for no other reason. And I think we need to be clear on that. That that is the only reason we should engage with that if it is about that genuine issue. But in terms of protecting our members and the provision of education for children and their young people, what we should be doing is ensuing and we do have a good relationship in the North between the teaching unions and unions representing non-teaching staff, so we built that relationship strong so that we can stand united on this across the educational field, across unions representing all of those people, and build the work in the communities and also use the Trades Councils where they exist in those areas to build a campaign of resistance where those children are being attacked for no other reason other than that they can be. Support the motion.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thank you Paddy.

Geraldine Kelly, UNITE

Sorry about that Chair, Geraldine Kelly, UNITE speaking in favour of this motion. I want to particularly speak about the support staff in schools, in particular in special education. I go in and out of schools representing our members and it is unbelievable the work they do. They don't get paid enough, they are dedicated and the teachers couldn't do their work without these people so please support this motion. Thank you.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Thanks Geraldine.

I suppose Conference that given the tenure of some of our discussions during the course of the last three days it was only fit that a woman finished off the conference, I think that is important.

Can I call on a vote on Motion 42 please, those in favour, thank you.

Can I ask for adoption of Principle EC Report Ref. Section 2, Decent Work, Better Future Parts 2, 4, agreed? Agreed, thank you.

Colleagues, can I just indicate that we now just need to formally adopt the complete report. Can that be agreed? Thank you. John.

John Douglas, Vice-President of Congress

Delegates, just a couple of announcements, I hope I have the right second name, Denise Crilly from NIPSA has won the Robert Ballagh print of Jim Larkin so that be collected. Well done Denise. I would now like to call on Pamela Dooley to move a vote of thanks to the outgoing President, Eugene McGlone, Pamela.

Pamela Dooley, UNISON

President, delegates, Pamela Dooley, UNISON and Cahir of the NIC. It is a privilege to have been asked to move the vote of thanks for our President, Eugene McGlone. Eugene has served this movement well. As a President he has chaired the Executive Council through difficult times with Council members with different agendas and opinions. He has stayed calm and remained fair, always giving a good hearing to all sides. For anyone it is a long hard journey to become the leader of the trade union movement of this island. To make your voice heard and to effectively change workers' lives for the better. Eugene has been on this journey for many years and has many years still to serve. You cannot make this journey alone or without finding a balance in your life to give you the support and the strength you need to keep you going. I am going to share with you some of the things his friends and colleagues have told me that I did not know about Eugene and you probably didn't either. I hope he doesn't mind.

First and foremost, he is a family man with a wife who keeps his feet firmly on the ground. One of the ways she does this is to make sure he watches his soaps. Where else do you see all the colours of life at large? He is also a Star Trek fan. Who would believe Eugene would become what is known a 'new age man'. Eugene was photographed in Donegall Street on Saturday of the G8 wheeling a pram. A proud grandfather of a baby girl, Cora. Do you think he was introducing her to the John Hewitt? I have also heard he has been seen in the park performing Tic Chi. But, what really makes Eugene the trade union leader that he is, is the belief in his class, the working class. He has learnt from other great leaders by being an avid reader of Irish history and trade union history. He has also learned from his visit to

Columbia that others face even greater challenges than us. Many of them paying with their lives. He is a strategic thinker who takes up a challenge and piece by piece works his way through the challenges like a dog with a bone until he wins his point. The sort of person that keeps going with an employer until finally they give up and he wins his fight for the workers. Surprise, I have also been told he plays chess.

Eugene went into his presidency knowing that if the trade union movement is to thrive they would need to change. He has worked tirelessly to that end. The enabling motion passed at this conference will ensure that work moves forward. Eugene ensured the theme of the conference was a legacy of the 1913. That has warned that for there to be a real legacy in terms of 1913, then it must be the continual resistance, growth and development of this movement. Organise, recruit, educate and density are the key components to success for our movement. Eugene has met during his presidency with the First Minister for the Welsh Assembly and has seen the possibilities for change on our island, particularly when he heard how the Welsh Assembly had said quite clearly that there would be no privatisation of public sector jobs in Wales under his watch. What is possible in Wales is equally possible in Ireland. I will end by saying that Eugene has supported and encouraged women to take their rightful place in our movement and I look forward to continuing to work with him and the incoming President John Douglas and the Vice Presidents, Brian and Patricia to make our movement a force to be reckoned with. Thank you Eugene.

John Douglas, Vice President of Congress

Can I now call on Seamus Dooley to second the vote of thanks, Seamus.

Seamus Dooley, NUJ

President, it is a pleasure to second this motion and to thank Eugene at the close of this historic Conference. It is fitting that we should do so in Belfast under the shadow of Larkin. I must confess that things have gone slightly wrong. We had booked Billy Bragg to close the conference. Joe O'Flynn vetoed that on the basis of cost. We then considered booking the Ulster Orchestra or even Stevie Fitzpatrick's Communication Workers' Band, Jimmy Kelly gave us a two word response, the second word was 'off'. He said he had spent enough on those bloody statues and therefore I am afraid you are left with someone that those of you of a certain age might remember and that is the Dooleys. Relax, however, President because even given Pride Week it would be entirely inappropriate for me to sing their hit number which was 'I think that I just might fall in love with you'!

As President you have led the Executive, usually with good humour, and have not sought to impose your own views during what have been frequently difficult and potentially divisive debates and it is the mark of a good Chair and it is a mark of an outstanding President, that frequently your own views were known during the discussion and that is to your credit, particularly given that Jimmy Kelly was sitting in the congregation.

You have chaired this conference with the same style and humour and in your opening address you right emphasised the need for delegate participation and the need for unity of purpose and spirit and I think when we look back on this conference that will be an abiding memory.

You have made yourself available during your presidency to affiliates and I know that from personal experience that the attendance of the President of the ICTU is something that is greatly valued by unions. Your support on the picket line for the BBC workers was greatly valued by the NUJ as was your attendance at the 10th Anniversary Conference marking the murder of Martin O'Hagan and the failure of the PSNI to secure a conviction for that murder.

Pamela has acknowledged the support of your family and that is entirely appropriate. All too often the families of those of us who served the trade union movement make sacrifices that are unacknowledged. But in addition to that, it is appropriate in seconding this thanks that on behalf of the Executive Council and members of Congress that we acknowledge the support of your own union, of your General Secretary Jimmy Kelly and of your members who have tolerated your absence and now look forward to your return to the field.

You are, I know, a proud Belfast man born between the mountains and the gam trees to the hooting of lost sirens and the clang of trams. You are someone who is enormously proud of this city and only once did you put your stamp on the Executive and that was the insistence that this event was held in Belfast in this year. It was an appropriate decision. We rejoice in that decision and we rejoice in the spirit of Larkin and it is that spirit of Larkin, who was so fond of one great union that he formed two, that I second this motion and wish you well and your family well in your retirement but just don't enjoy it too much and don't go away for too long. Thank you very much President.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Well, I am glad that is out of the way. I didn't know the people Pamela was talking about for a moment or two. It was as well she didn't mention my fishing because I haven't caught a thing all year but that is more to do with my inability as opposed to the fish not wanting to die.

John remarked when Pamela got up and started speaking and he said, being alive on your own obituary except I have to say something nice about you because you are still alive! I just don't recognise some of the things that are being said, I think they are probably slightly inflated.

Can I just say a few things about this conference. I have to say that Seamus is dead right. I was dead set on this conference coming to Belfast for one reason if not for another one and it is that it has been a while since it has been here. Belfast is the only place in the North where we can actually host a conference of this size and of this importance. And I think that it is necessary that we come as often as we possibly can and we haven't been since Brendan Mackin's presidency and if we weren't here this week, it would probably be another four years before we got back again and I think it is vitally important. And, I have to say that I think this venue is brilliant. I came into this venue the week after David, myself and Eileen Sweeney came in to have a look at it and agreed it was brilliant. I came in the following week with Mick O'Reilly who happened to be in Belfast and I said come on and I will show you the venue. He took a look at it and he said, God it is a great place for talking and then he went and got himself elected as President of the Dublin Trades Council so that he could come here and speak. And, this is a place for speeches. It is a place for explanation and it is a place, I think, that allows for quite confrontation if you can have that with thoughts and ideas. I said on Tuesday whenever I had the opportunity to speak, I quoted a deceased ex-colleague of mine, Howard Burns and a good comrade of mine, Peter Black commented that it was important to keep his name and his memory alive. And, I think it is important to keep the names and memories alive of all our comrades who have been here and been before us and have now gone. I don't care whether you are going to indulge me or not but I am going to do it, and I was speaking with Patricia McKeown on Tuesday evening and we were talking about the fact that Inez was being given a posthumous doctorate in Derry and when you look at the Obituaries and it is not a complete set of obituaries, every one of these people in this Obituaries page, page 164 of your Report, all added immensely to this movement. They made sure that we are here today and that we have been here this week. So, I am going to read the names out so that their names are mentioned and I know that there are people here who are not on it and I would encourage that for future conferences, whatever shape that conference takes that every time a comrade or good colleague died, whether it is someone

who you agreed with or loved, it doesn't really matter, make sure that their name is forwarded to Congress so that the staff can include it in the Obituaries. It is important that we know their names, so I am just going to read these names:

Ann Gould, Frank Bunting, Sheila Conroy, Seamus de Paor, Donal Nevin, Bob Gourley, Sean Redmond, Jim Cosgrave, Inez McCormack, Paddy Donnegan, Jack Cagney, Ben Kearney, Felix McCrossan. Thanks very much comrades.

I haven't finished yet.

I just need to say a few words about conference anyway itself. There are people I need to thank and I am going to take David's advice and not try and name everybody individually because I will certainly leave someone out. There are Congress staff that you see on the rostrum and they are staff that you know and work with throughout the year – the Industrial Officers, we see them all the time. There are also staff that we don't see who keep the machine ticking over, who oil the wheels of the machine and in terms of this conference, that is controlled by Eileen Sweeney, someone who I know most of you are aware of. What I would ask is that in thanking Eileen that she pass that on to all the other staff rather than me forget someone's name and to try and do it in that way. That's that done in a sense because we all know the quality of our front players, David, Peter, Sally Anne and Liam who runs the Scrutineers. We know the ability and the quality of them, they have been impressing us for years. But, this is a good space and I understand that one or two people make inquiries for this space for future conferences – I think you should use it. It is a place for talking.

We have had a good conference. I want to thank you for having a good Conference because the only way you get a good conference is that it doesn't matter about the wonderful resolutions or how smooth the machine tends to tick over, if you don't have the delegates and you don't come up and perform and you don't make a point and you don't force an opinion and force your opinion to be heard, then the conference will die. It will be useless and it will be pointless. There hasn't been an awful lot of acrimony. There have been one or two dissensions on issues that were raised but I have to say that I have been greatly impressed, particularly by the younger delegates and those who are first-timers who came to this rostrum. They are starting now on a journey that I probably started about forty years ago. They are starting on a journey of making relationships with other comrades and colleagues that will last them a lifetime and will improve for the better this movement and our class. That is important. And, what is also important is the fact that, only 20% I think of the total speakers were women, that's more than there have been in previous years. We need more of that. But one important thing about women at this conference is this – that of all ten of the women who sought election to the Executive Council, all ten have been elected, that is brilliant. That is an improvement. It is probably not if you didn't get elected but at the end of the day it is an improvement and we are moving there.

When Phil Jennings spoke to us at our closed session he made a reference to Mrs Brown's Boys, I am not going to repeat what he said, but he was referring to our friend O'Leary of course, I thought he was going to do that wee bit of a quote when talked about O'Leary from the Yeats poem at the September 1913, where he talks about Romantic Ireland is dead and gone and O'Leary in the grave, it is sort of wishful thinking but he didn't do that and that is fair comment. When Mike Jennings opened this morning's proceedings he mentioned that this was the 4th July and what that struck with me being the 4th July is really about Government by the people for the people as opposed to just a red, white and blue hat and everybody enjoy themselves on the drink. And I think we have been saying this during the course of these three days and it is vitally important that we continue to remember that.

There are probably one or two things that I should be saying that I haven't but there have been a couple of literary reference and I am pleased at Seamus Dooley for giving a wee bit more of McNiece who is one of my favourite poets, but in relation to other poets and I am going to finish on this one, in terms of the conference it is a couple of lines that used to be on my old union banner – the Transport and General Workers Banner, Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Banner and it is one of the poets from Templepatrick and it is: The right divine of labour will be the first of earthy things, that the worker and the thinker, a man who is only kings. And you are truly a man to its only kings and you have delivered that at this conference and I appreciate being here.

Now, it falls on me to welcome John as the incoming President and I have to say that I remember two years ago the sigh of relief that Jack gave at the end of conference and I fully understand and appreciate that believe me. It is a very fast two years. I said in Killarney when you introduced me as the new President, my wife Susan who is up above and I gave her a wave and said that is me for two years and it has been a wee bit like that, I am coming home shorty though! It is intense and no matter what you think about it and your day job doesn't go away. John's day job is not going to go away, it is wearing him down as you can see by the way! I have known John for a long time when he was in the Printers Union. He was the young rising star in the Printers Union, along with Gerry Light by the way. You will notice that Gerry is wearing a lot better – it must be the moisture Gerry! In terms of commitment and durability and stickability, John is someone of that measure. I know he is going to add massively to our ability to deliver our programme over the next two years and I am looking forward to serving with him on the Executive as the incoming President. John, it is all yours. Thanks very much. And, before you say a word John, Jimmy Kelly wasn't quite done with his statues yet. There was some concern about whether this was brown or bronze. I can assure you that is definitely bronze, it is not a brown shirt. That was a view that there was one we were keeping in case the Taoiseach did turn up and we hastily worrying if we should paint it blue but we decided against that. John, this is not somebody else's, it is for you comrade.

John Douglas, Incoming President of Congress

A few things I would like to say, a lot of people I want to thank. I am a bit like you Eugene, I don't want to leave anyone out but my dad left school when he was twelve to work in a factory where he met my Ma. He became a shop steward of the FWUI, a lifetime member as she was. He passed away in the year 2000. My mother works as a home help, she is eighty years of age and she still works as a home help, still a member of SIPTU and proud to be a member of SIPTU. My father passed the flame on to me and my mother passed the flame on to me and we must make sure that we pass it on to the next generation of our children, the next generation.

It is a great honour to be elected President and I would like to thank you for placing your trust in me and I promise to do my best and repay that faith you placed in me. I want to begin by thanking Eugene. Eugene has brought tremendous energy and commitment to Congress and has helped me and has helped steer Congress through some very difficult decisions in very difficult years, so thanks very much Eugene for all your support over all those years.

I also want to congratulate my fellow officers and those newly elected on to the Executive Committee as it comes in. I look forward to working with you over the next couple of years. I would also like to pass a vote of thanks to all the Congress staff particularly David Begg, for their tireless work on our behalf over the last two years as well. In addition I want to also mention and thank my team in MANDATE trade union, from our admin staff, our porter to our officials, to our National Executive Council, to our Shop Stewards, to our activists, to all our members for the great support they have given me in the thirty-three years I have been employed by the trade union movement. It has been a pleasure and an honour.

At this point I just want to say that I am going to be an inclusive President that everyone's viewpoint will be taken on board whether you come from a small union or a big union. I know it is important. I came from a small union; we had less than 5,000 when we were the Bar Workers' Union. We eventually restructured ourselves, amalgamated with IDATU to form MANDATE and that process of restructuring and reorganisation, as in Motion 9 which was passed, has to continue for the strength of the trade union movement.

I know people want to chill out, it has been a long two and a half days and I haven't had a drink over the whole two and a half days! No one believes that for some reason, I don't know why. We have had three good days of debate, discussion both formal and informal, so I am not going to hold you too long. Just a couple of important points. I have probably three priorities and they are organise, organise and organise. They are the three priorities of the trade union movement. Our mission is to mobilise and campaign for a fairer, better society, North and South and to do that we must reclaim the heart and minds of the working class. We must expose the agenda of the other side. In the past we have allowed our enemies to divide us but they have not conquered us and they never will. We will unite in solidarity, expose the type of society that they want. A society the neo-liberals and their supporters are proposing is a society that puts no value on public sector workers, no value on public services other than the bottom line – the wage cost. An agenda which educated children for immigration, which condemns 100,000 plus building workers to an existence on the dole, where the pension savings of tens of thousands of private sector workers are allowed to go down the drain, which values saving bond holders but reduces the availability of Special Needs Assistants and home helps to the most vulnerable, where twenty-six million workers across Europe have no jobs and are drowning in debt and in fear of losing their homes. Irish people in trade unions will wake up and smell the coffee, I have no doubt in that but we need to do so as one. The alarm clock is sounding. We are at war as has been mentioned here. We are in a battle for values and a battle for ideas that will shape the future of this island. The trade union movement, together with community groups, political activists must be in the frontline of leading the fight back. Our message is one of hope and a decent future for all on this island. This vision for the future will not be given to us, we are going to have to win it. However, this can only be achieved if we include all our activists in a coherent and consistent campaign not just one day's of actions or marches or one day marches, a coherent strategic campaign to fight back. That is why it is critical for the trade union movement to reorganise immediately. That is why it is so important that that Motion 9 was adopted on Tuesday. It is clear that the trade union movement must also make a political impact if we are to win. There is no doubt about that in my mind. If we could mobilise the 800,000 members and their families to vote for progressive political parties, it is likely that we would not be facing austerity policies North and South. What is also clear that we could mobilise our political muscle of the trade union movement, we would today already be enjoying free collective bargaining and our public sector members would not have to endure the FEMPI legislation hanging over their heads. On the FEMPI Bill, let me be very clear and I wrote these couple of words before the speakers spoke and before the emergency motions, free collective bargaining is a human right and FEMPI Bill 2011 is an attack on that right and it imposes penalties on workers who exercise their free choice in collective bargaining. This legislation must be repealed as a matter of urgency.

I also think the tide is changing as well with regard to corporation tax. We have heard of the Amazons, the Apples and the stateless corporations who don't belong in America and don't exist in Ireland but transfer billions throughout the world. Multi-nationals who operate on this island must be made pay their fair share towards a recovery. A minimal social contribution if you will. It is not acceptable that they benefit from our investment, particularly low-paid and middle income families, the investment that we make in education systems, in our health

systems, in our infrastructure and pay nothing back. Remember they are getting the benefits of quality services. They have a social and corporate responsibility to citizens of Ireland and the world should be making them pay their fair share. And I am also sick of politicians, North and South, pandering and tipping the forelock to multi-national's abuse of the tax regime when the same politicians are cutting services to the most vulnerable and criminalise ordinary workers who can't pay service charges.

But, the present crisis does present the trade union movement not only with many challenges but with many great opportunities. We are the biggest civil society organisation in Ireland. Our challenge is to build on our strength, refine our structures and to mobilise with unity of purpose. We do have common cause but this will require sacrifices, it will require generosity, and it will require solidarity. We have but one chance. As I said before, failure is not an option. I listened to speaker after speaker from most unusual sectors of the economy in terms of I wasn't expecting those to have the same problems as we have experienced for ten or fifteen years in the retail sector, university lectures, teachers, nurses talking about zero hour contracts, low-pay, temporary contracts, casualisation. As I said on Tuesday, an injury to a retail worker is an injury to a nurse, an injury to a nurse is an injury to a building worker, an injury to a building workers is an injury to a teacher and that is the way we got to start thinking. Let's all stand side by side together, united, strong, determined. Let's draw that line in the sand. Let's drawn that line in the sand thus far and no further. We are beginning the fight back and it starts here. Thank you very much delegates.

There was just one other thing, I am having a bit of a Hooley down in the Dockers Club tonight from 7 to 9, everyone is invited.

Eugene McGlone, President of Congress

Conference, my last act is to call on the General Secretary. Please take your seats again for two minutes.

David Begg, General Secretary

So, relax folks – this genuinely won't take very long at all. Just at the end of conference it is customary for me to thank a number of people. I know the outgoing and incoming Presidents have both thanked a range of people but it is my duty to do it as well and it is a pleasant one it is.

First of all this venue was extremely good as Eugene said. I think it worked extremely well but part of it was that the work of the manager here, Harry Orr and his staff has been extremely cooperative. Thank you very much.

Just in terms also of the conference arrangements, the Chairman of Standing Orders, Jack McGinley has done an excellent job as has his committee – the Standing Orders Committee. The Chairman of the Scrutineers, Billy Hannigan, I want to thank him and his colleagues on the Scrutineers Committee and the Tellers as well.

Just to add my own compliments, if you like, to Eugene. It has been a real pleasure Eugene to work with you for the last two years, quite genuinely. It is a bit of a risk in saying this, you mightn't agree, but I think we have become very firm friends as a result of that and I think we worked extremely well and extremely cooperatively and I was very pleased to do that.

I congratulate John. John is a very good man in the trade union movement and Congress is fortunate to have somebody of his calibre coming into the leadership at this time.

I also want to mention the two Vice-Presidents, Patricia who has been Vice-President for the last couple of years and who does an enormous amount of work for Congress as was evident from her contribution yesterday and to congratulate Brian coming in as Vice-President. I am looking forward very much to working with Brian as well who is another very formidable and high calibre representative of the trade union movement.

In particular, I also want to say a word of thanks to Joe because Joe was very generous to Sally Anne and myself in his opening remarks on Tuesday but what is probably not known is the amount of work that he puts in to the management of the finances of Congress which, to be quite honest colleagues, is a challenge at the best of times. But, Joe has his day job to do which is a very exacting one but he gives an enormous amount of contribution to the Congress. But not alone that, his input to policy making is extremely beneficial to us all and it has been a difficult enough year for Joe on the front of SIPTU and that but he has done an enormous amount of work for Congress and I thank him very much.

I also want to thank my own colleagues and I know they have been thanked by the outgoing Officers but nevertheless, I need to express my appreciation to them too. Because I think in all fairness, if you carefully look through the report and I know one delegate was criticising it this morning, but nevertheless it does represent an enormous amount of work done over two years in circumstances where the resources of Congress have been paired back very significantly. And if we didn't achieve everything that people wanted us to achieve, you just have to keep thinking that Congress is a little bit like the United Nations – we don't actually have a standing army of our own to deploy, we depend on other people's armies to achieve things, so my own colleagues have worked extremely hard. I am very grateful to them. I think a lot of other things have been achieved as well. I think the way Congress presents itself now to the public at large is streets ahead of what was our situation years ago. And an awful lot of that is due to Sally Anne's abilities in the field of communication and design and so on. I actually consider Sally Anne to be a kind of creative genius that we are extremely lucky to have here in Congress. And, the last but not least, person I want to especially mention, as the President has, is Eileen Sweeney who has worked with me very, very closely. Now what you possibly mightn't be aware of is that as well as this conference, we were asked to hold the conference of the ETUC in Dublin to coincide with the presidency and to be honest, it was a request that we needed like a hole in the head coming as it did in June just within a month of our own Congress. But anyway it was a prestigious thing from the point of view of the trade union movement in Ireland and its relationship throughout Europe so it was decided to take it on, but Eileen managed both of those conferences and that is not easily done because it involves frankly, Eileen starts work at 7am in the morning and she doesn't end until 7pm in the evening. You cannot with money buy that type of commitment I assure you and I want to thank her very much for what she has done.

President what I am going to say next by the way Eugene is not because I want one of your statues, I just want to assure you that, but I want to make a few remarks concerning my own situation. I was reluctant as to whether I would mention it or not but when Eileen gives us the running order of conference, something which is not very glamorously called 'The Idiot's Guide to Running Conference', and maybe that is what we need exactly but every minute of the whole thing is panned out and at the very end of it, there is a couple of words that say 'Conference is over, Happy Days'. Now I have to say in normal circumstances that is a sentiment that I would agree with wholeheartedly but not on this occasion I have to say. It is tinged with a little bit of nostalgia I suppose because I have suddenly realised that before the next conference I will have reached the retirement age for the General Secretary of Congress and I won't be therefore involved. But I have a lot to do in the meantime. The priorities are, I think John made the point extremely well about the organising, but for me directly the things I see myself as having to do is to try to deliver the collective bargaining result, to write a

Constitution for the new trade union movement and to produce with NERI the economic and social model that will guarantee us full employment for our future generations. That is our biggest challenge and what I want to try to do in the coming weeks and months.

Finally, I would just simply say that one of the difficulties I think, we discuss politics quite a lot and I am not going to open that up again, but if I had the time I would be able to prove something to you. That the only time that social change, historically, has been achieved in Europe is with a combination of a strong trade union movement and a Labour Party in Government, and there is understandable disappointment with the performance of the Labour Party. And, I would say to be honest it can't actually be otherwise because you can't run a successful austerity policy, it is a contradiction in terms and it won't be a success I have no doubt about that. But you need to also think for us, that there is this dilemma – the Labour Party for the Labour Party would be better not to be in Government. That is absolutely true but how would it be for us? You see because the dilemma is when we are finished talking this week, unions of all sorts will be in to me saying who you ever go in to this Minister and that Minister and the other Minister and try and achieve this, that and the other because we are depending on them to protect us from the consequences of a different political configuration. That is the difficulty and I think John made a very excellent point in his inaugural address there as President and it is this. That if we set our minds to it to get our people to enter politics on a scale of some significance, imagine if you could deliver 800,000 members or even 500,000 or 200,000 or even 100,000, then you could afford to challenge the existing political order. Then you would get a political spectrum and a political performance which was considerable different than the way it is at the moment. And, that is really the challenge for us and something we need to reflect on. This conference, I think, its history will show was a critical juncture for the trade union movement in terms of our own organisational structure. We made the decision this week which will have profound implications into the future. We need also to think politically to get the right mixture for the future because it is only then that we can through those two means, we can get the right social construct in our country going forward. So, in a way the hand of history does lie on our shoulders from 1913 of course but because of our seminal responsibility to the future generations of people to build a society that they can have decent livelihoods in. Marx once said that people make history but not in circumstances of their own choosing.

I also want to just say to you that there will be a lot of change. I have mentioned my own situation. Also a great servant of ours Kevin Duffy, as Chairman of the Labour Labour Court will be retiring himself before the next conference. He has been a great servant of Congress and I think of the country as whole and he is attending conference for the last time, so I want to wish him particularly well.

Just let me finally draw on my vast experience of thirty odd years of coming to these conferences to exhort you to go out, as they said in Hill Street Blues, and do it to them before they do it to us.

End of Conference