



GENEVA (ILO News) – The President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, has called for immediate measures to help create jobs, boost economic growth and preserve social stability in Europe.

"Five years of low growth or no-growth, not to say a recession, have resulted in higher unemployment levels, unprecedented since the eighties. This is affecting the lives of millions and could eventually threaten the social fabric of countries and our Union, and fighting it is our number one political priority today," said Van Rompuy in a speech to the [102nd International Labour Conference](#).

"Growth and jobs are the ultimate goal of all the reforms..., but reforms take time to bear fruit. So we also need measures with an immediate impact, to help create jobs, to spur economic activity, to preserve social stability and human dignity," he added.

In his welcoming remarks, ILO Director-General Guy Ryder assured President Van Rompuy

that "we are ready to be partners to address the crisis, with an emphasis on decent work, promoting enterprises, good governance, investment and social justice."

## **Youth employment**

Van Rompuy put special emphasis on the issue of youth employment, saying that the European Council has redirected considerable amounts of EU funds, which have directly benefited 800,000 young people in the eight most affected countries.

He said that all EU countries have signed up to the Youth Guarantee, a commitment that every young man or woman should receive a good offer of employment, education or training within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed.

"Two countries already have it, but it's a unique achievement to have 27, soon 28, countries commit to this high standard – which I believe is fully in line with the ILO's philosophy. The time is now for full mobilisation to turn that commitment into reality, as quickly as possible. I want EU leaders to focus on it at our next summit at the end of the month."

## **Working with the ILO and its social partners**

Van Rompuy said that the EU will help companies to create jobs and that it is working on improving credit access for small and medium companies, not least since they create three quarters of all European jobs:

"Financing the economy is, together with youth unemployment, the major topic for our next European Council summit."

He explained that the EU is involving European employers' and workers' organizations to find practical solutions and exchange best practises.

"Like at the ILO, social dialogue is at the heart of our social model, even if it is under pressure these days."

"The European Union believes in the power of universal norms and standards. The ILO has a fundamental role to play in helping countries to repair the economic and social fabric. It's only by working together that we can truly achieve our goals", President Van Rompuy concluded, stressing the need for social dialogue and the constantly growing partnership and collaboration between the ILO and EU.

**Source:** [ILO News](#)