



Mr John Monks
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BELGIUM

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Dear John,

I read with great interest the article entitled "Goodbye Brussels" you published to say farewell after 8 years of leadership as General Secretary of ETUC.

When somebody leaves at the end of the mandate only nice words are said about all the achievements.

So I will join the choir! We have shared a lot together over that period. You have been a very efficient counterpart, a great debater and you have – with your important background – fought for EU policies. As a real European thinker, understanding what European integration can bring to citizens, workers and companies. During these 8 years, we have had good times as well as bad times.

I must recognise that you have warned against some excesses in the financial world before the first signs of the financial crisis appeared. We have debated all this at length in numerous panels and conferences over the last 8 years.

The European Union is certainly not going through an easy period. But having read your letter, I have to nuance the statement that Europe is today in a worse position than when you started.

Apparently, you have forgotten all the debates on the Constitutional Treaty and the negative referenda in France, the Netherlands and Ireland. You do not mention the enlargement of the European Union to 10 additional members in 2004 and 2 more in 2007. And even looking back at the financial crisis, the European institutions have worked hard in order to alleviate the consequences of the crisis and the EU resisted better to the shock than expected. As a result, 1 million jobs will be created this year. In some countries, tough reforms have to be undertaken and I am well aware of the impact on citizens and workers. But ask yourself if the reason for their difficulties lies at the European level.



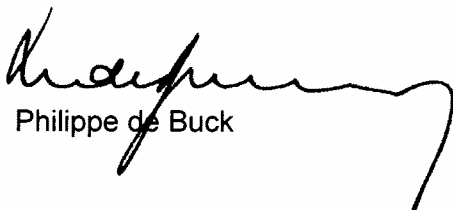
Whilst wishing you the best for the future, I have to express my disappointment that you have not made a single reference to the European social dialogue. I am glad that you acknowledged the results of the weeks and days that we, and all our colleagues, spent together to try to end forge a consensus on common challenges during the ETUC congress in Athens this week.

During the 8 years you spent in leading ETUC, we have made agreements on harassment, on stress at work, on parental leave, on European Works Council, lifelong learning, we examined how restructuring and flexicurity were handled across Europe. We made common recommendations on how to activate labour markets. We have drawn conclusions on how to deal with the Laval and other court cases on posting of workers. Recently, we issued a common statement urging the European Union and its member states to take their 2020 strategy seriously this time.

Personally, I find that it is not a bad result and you can be proud of it. Now that you are starting an active life in the House of Lords, I hope you will make it known in Westminster that there is a European social dialogue that looks at how to improve the competitiveness, growth and job creation in Europe!

I look forward to continue this work with your successor, Bernadette Ségol, and wish you personally all the best.

Yours Sincerely,



Philippe de Buck