

**Salute to the VII Congress of the UIL Rome and Lazio**

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**ECTUN**

*Dear colleagues,*

It is a great honor to be here on the occasion of the VII Congress of the UIL of Rome and Lazio, on behalf of the ECTUN network.

We are here on the kind invitation of the Secretary General, Alberto Civica, and on this occasion we inaugurate the new era of our network.

It could not be more appropriate to start from here, since in November 1985, during the III Congress of the UIL, the idea of creating a Permanent Forum of the European capitals' unions, for a continuous exchange of ideas, experiences and for undertaking and developing initiatives on themes of common interest, was born.

It has been 33 years already. The world has changed profoundly, progressing and regressing at the same time.

However, the need to have this network has always remained stable; indeed, it is more necessary today than ever, since there is always the need to act in common, as unions, to face similar problems.

The ECTUN has also changed. From the Permanent Conference that was before, it has become the ECTUN network, which from this year on has an internal structure, a Standing Committee and a Coordinator, elected.

With this occasion we thank ETUC and personally Luca Visentini, for his substantial help and support.

We are convinced that it is worth to have such a network of the European capitals, because first of all, capital cities have a special role in the framework of each country.

Capitals have always been the engines of development and the arena of social, economic and cultural innovation.

We speak of technological innovation that is increasingly penetrating daily life, connected to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, introducing new models, strategies and paradigms. It is a technological breakthrough that will also have victims in the world of work.

It is quite disturbing what the president of the World Bank said, that 150 million workers will lose their jobs by 2022, while 300 million who will arrive will not find work.

In the EU, 65% of young graduates are looking for work in sectors that are disappearing. Today in Europe, IT skills are required for 7 out of 10 workers.

The challenges for all trade unions and especially those of capitals are many:

- First of all the work. Our members look for work and opportunities. They want to leave the years of economic recession behind and move towards a period of development and prosperity as soon as possible.
- Working conditions and workers' rights, especially for atypical and precarious workers.
- Negotiations and collective labor agreements.
- Wage rise in accordance with the ETUC campaign.
- Relevant skills, which prepare young workers for a highly globalized, competitive and complex labor market.
- Comfortable accommodation at a fair price in adequately maintained neighborhoods, in the capitals that grow at a remarkable speed.
- Open and clean cities, without pollution.
- Preventive, responsible and lasting actions regarding climate change.
- Better coordinated policies and tools at local, national and European level are needed to tackle poverty in disadvantaged neighborhoods.
- Overcoming the challenges facing refugees, related to the refugees' issue that has become a primary requirement for the EU.
- Follow the transition to a more circular economy, where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained for as long as possible and the generation of

waste minimized. It is an essential contribution to the efforts to develop a sustainable economy, low carbon, resources efficient and competitive economy. This transition offers Europe the opportunity to transform the economy and generate new sustainable competitive advantages.

The circular economy will boost competitiveness by protecting businesses against scarcity of resources and volatile prices, helping to create both new business opportunities and innovative, more efficient ways of producing and consuming. It will create local jobs at all skills levels and opportunities for social integration and cohesion. At the same time, it will save energy and help avoid the irreversible damages caused by using up resources at a rate that exceeds the Earth's capacity to renew them in terms of climate and biodiversity, air, soil and water pollution.

These are still other challenging issues having a similar resonance in our capitals and are issues that we as network we have dealt with and we continue to deal with.

We in ECTUN strongly stress the necessity and the value of close cooperation; this is a commitment to strengthen our role, prestige and usefulness for those we represent, the workers of the European Capitals.