

Frankfurt, 6 March 2015



Press release

– Embargo: 17 March 2015 – 12h00 CET –

Inauguration of the new headquarters of the European Central Bank: European trade unions call for more democracy and a better balance of power for Europe and the ECB/ Eurosystem

On 18 March 2015, the new headquarters of the European Central Bank will be officially inaugurated in Frankfurt. The architecture represents the idea of a peaceful, socially balanced and united democratic Europe. With the memorial to mark the deportation of Jewish citizens from Frankfurt's wholesale market hall to the Nazi concentration camps, the site hosts a reminder of Germany's and, hence, Europe's darkest past. In contrast to this reminder, the new ECB headquarters demonstrate transparency, light and ample space for communications inside its walls. This architecture evokes Europe's politically and economically united and prosperous future. We congratulate the workers, the architects, as well as the ECB and the Eurosystem on the completion of this unique building, owned by and designed for serving the citizens of Europe. **Yet, like Europe, this building ensemble, too, is still ring-fenced.**

During the inauguration event at the €1.3 billion, landmark building, we expect mass protests by citizens from all over Europe. Many of them call for financial, social and economic policies that are different to, and better than, the current path of austerity and social cuts.

“We see the European project at severe risk. **Therefore, instead of more austerity and social cuts, we call for more democracy and a better balance of power in Europe, and within the ECB/Eurosystem**”, said Harald Fiedler, Head of the DGB Frankfurt.

Specifically, we urge a further strengthening of the role of European Parliament, more elements of direct democracy and a strengthening of the rights of the European Court of Justice in the **enforcement of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights.**

We call for investment, instead of austerity. We call for equitable taxation, instead of unbalanced cuts in social security and employees' rights. We call for a better balance of power in European economic policy-making. The increasingly unequal distribution of wealth is hurting the economic system and jeopardising social freedom in society. Public debt problems should be borne by a tax imposed on those who are able to bear it.

“We are of the opinion that the **labour and social security legislation for ECB staff, and also for all Eurosystem staff affected**, should be made in a democratically legitimated process,” said Emmanuel Larue, President of IPSO. “Today, all relevant rules and ‘laws’ are set unilaterally by the ECB Governing Council, a forum of 25 men and one woman, behind closed doors, a situation made possible by way of Art. 36.1 of the Statute of the European System of Central Banks and of

the European Central Bank.” The balance of power between staff and employer, especially that in an independent institution as powerful and independent as the ECB/Eurosystem, must be established with the involvement of the European Parliament and the social partners in the legislative process, a condition that is currently non-existent.

Responsible and contact:

Emmanuel Larue, IPSO, +496913447622 or +4917655578921 (French, English, German)

Harald Fiedler, DGB, +496927300572 or +491719729964 (German)

Wolfgang Hermann, EPSU, +491736658382 (German, English)

Thierry Desanois, SCECBU, +33142977090 (French, English)

Oliver Roethig, UNI Europa, +32479072224 (English, German, French)