

## EZA Brussels Conference 2023

### Programme

## “Workers’ organisations as actors of European anti-inflation policies and drivers of innovation”

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> (14:30–18:00) and Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 (09:30–13:00)**  
Thon Hotel EU, Rue de la Loi 75, 1040 Brussels

**Conference languages: EN, FR, DE, ES**

At a time of high inflation and soaring energy prices, the EZA Brussels conference 2023 aims to discuss responses that the European Union (EU), its member states and the social partners are deploying to address these challenges. The conference will focus on the importance of securing citizens’ purchasing power; the effectiveness of the European Central Bank’s (ECB) monetary policy and its possible negative effects on workers; and the contribution of EU policies to reduce external strategic dependencies and increase the EU’s resilience.

In the first panel, workers’ and employers’ representatives will discuss unions’ possible strategies in a context of high inflation. They will examine, in particular, whether workers’ representatives should use their bargaining power to mitigate the impact of rising prices on their members or, on the contrary, whether raising wages excessively could fuel further price increases. The panel will also analyse how unions can start taking advantage of the adequate minimum wages directive from now on, although member states have two years to transpose its content in national law.

The second panel will examine the EU’s monetary policy response to inflation. After outlining the ECB’s current strategy, the rationale underpinning its choices and its expected outcomes, the discussants will focus on the effectiveness of monetary tightening policies and their impact on workers. They will also analyse why the ECB’s policy is receiving so little attention from the unions considering its potential impact on employment.

Against the background of rising energy prices’ contribution to inflationary pressure, the third panel will provide an outlook for the EU’s strategical reorientation: how can the EU and the European industry contribute to reduce current external dependencies to improve its innovative capacity while remaining competitive at the same time?

### DAY I: Tuesday 21 March 2023

13:00	Welcome Buffet
14:30	<b>Opening remarks</b> Luc Van den Brande, President, EZA
14:45	<b>Keynote speech: EU’s social agenda in the context of rising inflation</b> Antoine Kasel, Head of Cabinet of Nicolas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights
15:15	Q&A – Debate
15:45	Coffee break

## PANEL I – Securing citizens’ purchasing power

Moderation: Pedro Estêvão, Member of the Scientific Council, CoLABOR, and national coordinator, BASE-FUT

<b>16:15</b>	<b>Strategies for social dialogue in times of inflation: workers’ perspective</b> <b>Veselin Mitov</b> , International Secretary for European Policies, Bulgarian Confederation of Labour Podkrepa and Member of the European Economic and Social Committee
	<b>Strategies for social dialogue in times of inflation: employers’ perspective</b> <b>Isaline Ossieur</b> , Adviser, BusinessEurope
	<b>Securing citizens’ purchasing power: most recent EU-level initiatives</b> <b>Dennis Radtke</b> , Member of the European Parliament and EPP Coordinator for Employment and Social Affairs
	<b>A timely and effective implementation of the adequate minimum wages directive</b> <b>Torsten Müller</b> , Senior Researcher, European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)
	Q&A – Debate

<b>18:00</b>	Networking Buffet
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## DAY II: Wednesday 22 March 2023

## PANEL II – Tackling inflation using monetary policy, but at which price?

Moderation: Joseph Thouvenel, Confederal Secretary, French Confederation of Christian Workers (CFTC)

<b>09:30</b>	<b>The European Central Bank’s response to inflation</b> <b>David Sondermann</b> , Deputy Head of Division, Supply Side, Labour and Surveillance, European Central Bank
	<b>Monetary policy and social justice</b> <b>Clément Fontan</b> , Professor of European economic policy, Université Catholique de Louvain
	<b>The role and vision of trade unions in the monetary policy debate</b> <b>Renaat Hanssens</b> , Advisor, Research Department, Belgian Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (ACV-CSC)
	Q&A – Debate

<b>11:00</b>	Coffee Break
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## PANEL III – Innovation and industrial future in a changing world order

Moderation: Sigrid Schraml, Secretary-General, EZA

<b>11:30</b>	<b>A resilient European Union: Reducing the EU’s strategic dependencies</b> <b>Outi Slotboom</b> , Director, Strategy and Economic Analysis, European Commission’s DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
	<b>EU industrial policy and the open strategic autonomy strategy: the challenges ahead</b> <b>Alexander Conway</b> , Risk Consultant, Resilium
	Q&A – Debate

<b>12:50</b>	<b>Concluding remarks</b> <b>Piergiorgio Sciacqua</b> , Co-President, EZA
<b>13:00</b>	End of conference