

149th ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS

.....

Held at:

**The Brighton Centre,
Brighton**

on:

**Sunday, 10th September 2017
Monday, 11th September 2017
Tuesday, 12th September 2017
and
Wednesday, 13th September 2017**

.....

Congress President:

DR. MARY BOUSTED

.....

**PROCEEDINGS — DAY ONE
(Sunday, 10th September 2017)**

.....

**Conference reported by:
Marten Walsh Cherer Limited,
1st Floor, Quality House,
6-9 Quality Court, Chancery Lane,
London WC2A 1HP.
email: info@martenwalshcherer.com**

.....

FIRST DAY: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10th 2017

(Congress assembled at 4.00 p.m.)

The President (*Dr Mary Bousted*): Good afternoon, Congress. Will delegates please take their seats and will Congress come to order. I have great pleasure in opening this, the TUC's 149th Congress in Brighton, and I warmly welcome all delegates to the Brighton Centre.

The programme of music this week has been put together by *Music for Youth*, and many thanks to the Cole Porter Sextet who have been playing for us this afternoon. Can we thank them. (*Applause*)

Approval of Scrutineers and Tellers

The President: The first formal item of business is to ask Congress to approve the tellers and scrutineers as set out on page 10 of the General Purposes Committee Report booklet. Is that agreed? (*Agreed*) If any teller has not yet met Matilda Quiney of the TUC staff, would they, please, come to the Tellers' table located on the floor to my right.

If there is an emergency, you will receive instructions on what to do either from me or over the tannoy. Details of evacuation procedures are posted on the doors of the hall. There are no fire alarms scheduled. If you hear the alarm, it's for real. If any delegates require first aid, requests should be made, in the first instance, to any member of staff of the Brighton Centre.

Welcome to Sororal and Fraternal Delegates

The President: Congress, I would now like to welcome Sororal and Fraternal delegates and visitors to Congress, who are seated in the hall in front of you. We are pleased to welcome guests from trade unions around the world. We have with us Esther Lynch from the European Trade Union Confederation. (*Applause*) We also have with us Huber Ballesteros from Colombia (*Applause*) as well as representatives from Justice for Domestic Workers. (*Applause*) We will be joined later by other colleagues from the Irish Congress, the International Trade Union Confederation, the German DGB as well as from the ILO, UNI-Global and the US labour movement. There will be a number of other representatives from global union federations, individual union representatives and foreign visitors here this week, and they are all most welcome.

This year's Sororal Delegate from the Trades Union Councils Conference is Moss Greenshields, and again, Moss, you are very welcome. (*Applause*)

During the course of the week, Congress, I will be joined on the platform by the Vice-President and other members of the General Council, including those with lead responsibilities for the relevant sections of the General Council Report.

Obituary

The President: Colleagues, we now come to the Obituary section of the General Council's Report from page 84, where we remember our trade union colleagues who have died during the past year. You can read more about the contribution that many of these colleagues made to the trade union Movement in the General Council Report. Large print and Brail versions of the report have been made available to those who have requested them. In asking you to remember all of our former colleagues, I ask you also to remember other trade union colleagues who have died in the past year, both here and around the world, including Tracey Twist, Assistant General Secretary of the NASUWT. I am sure our thoughts are also with those who have suffered loss through war, acts of terrorism and natural disasters during the past year.

Congress, at this time we usually re-commit ourselves to world peace and justice. Can I just say that when we see the dreadful brinkmanship being played out on the Korean peninsula there never has been a more important time for the unions to stand up for working people, for peace and justice all over the globe. Let us hope that good sense and calm heads lead to a peaceful resolution to the tensions being played out in that region. *(Applause)* Can those who are able, please, now stand for a few minutes' quiet reflection.

(Congress stood in silent tribute)

Report of the General Purposes Committee

The President: Congress, I now call upon Linda McCulloch, the Chair of the General Purposes Committee, to report to us on the progress of business and other Congress arrangements.

Linda McCulloch (*Chair, General Purposes Committee*): Good afternoon, Congress. The General Purposes Committee has approved 13 composite motions. Composite motions 1 to 12 are included in section 3 of the GPC Report and the composite motions booklet that you have all received. Composite motion 13 on Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People will be circulated to delegates in due course. On behalf of the GPC, I would like to thank all those unions that have co-operated and worked together to reach agreement on the composite motions.

Congress, the General Council has agreed two statements, on the TUC Campaign Plan and on Making a jobs-first, rights-first Brexit a reality. These are included in the GPC Report.

I can also report that the General Purposes Committee has approved one emergency motion. Emergency motion no. 1 on the Royal Mail will be moved by the CWU and seconded by Unite. The President will advise when it is hoped that this emergency motion will be taken.

Congress, can I remind you that only materials approved by the GPC may be distributed within the hall and venue. Can I also remind delegates that the mover of each motion may speak for five minutes and other speakers for up the three minutes and then Mary will press the buzzer. Thank you for your co-operation. I will report further to you on the progress of business and other GPC decisions when necessary throughout Congress. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Linda. Congress, I now invite you, formally, to receive the GPC's Report. Is that agreed? (*Agreed*)

As Linda has reported, the General Council has agreed a statement on Making a jobs-first, rights-first Brexit a reality, which will be taken this afternoon, and will be moved by Steve Turner, the General Council lead on Europe. The General Council statement on the TUC Campaign Plan will be taken with the General Secretary's Address to Congress on Monday morning. Congress, in her report, Linda also reported agreement on Emergency Motion 1, the Royal Mail, in the name of the CWU, and I will let Congress know when I am able to take this emergency motion.

As Linda has reported, it is very important to respect speaking times, which are to be five minutes for moving a motion and three minutes for seconding a motion and for all other speakers. Congress, as President, let me tell you that these time limits are not an optional extra and they will be respected.

Delegates, before we start the formal business, let me remind you that each delegate credential has a bar code on it. When you are waiting to speak in the front row of seats, a steward will scan the bar code and this will allow us to see your name and union on the main screen during the speech.

Delegates, we start with Section 1 of the General Council Report: The Economy, the section on housing from page 17. I call paragraphs 1.1, 1.5 and motion 3 Building a new housing consensus. The General Council support the motion, which is to be moved by UNISON and seconded by Unite.

Building a new housing consensus

Conroy Lawrence (*UNISON*) moved Motion 3.

He said: Congress and President, I work at Lewisham Hospital in London. Like all of you, I see members struggling with impossible choices at the end of the month before pay day. At the root of those choices is often the cost of their housing, crippling costs that drive choices of where to work, where to live and often far away from their communities and families. Whether to start a family or not or other major life choices are often, sadly, influenced by the cost of housing. For far too long, housing has been the political dog that did not bark. The general election this year changed the public debate in this country and showed that, finally, 38 years after the Tories began dismantling the public services and denying millions of people their basic human right to a home, the tide of public opinion is turning. Today there are 1.5 million fewer homes available for rent. People on low incomes can afford less than they could 38 years ago. The population has grown dramatically since.

As a Londoner, I can see this is why families with children, the elderly and disabled end up being housed on the 18th floor of a tower block. The scandal that surrounds the Grenfell House tragedy lies not just in the repeated failure of the Government to listen and act on the advice they received but in the Conservative political mantra that regulation is bad. The Tories 38-year strategy of dismantling public housing has been the biggest privatisation in this country's history. The Right to Buy was misnamed from the start. It was the "Right to a Discount". So 38 years on we find that huge numbers of homes have been sold and are now owned by private landlords, in one

case by the son of the Tory minister who introduced the Right to Buy, and often in companies registered in tax havens. The Tories knew that the caps to local housing allowances would drive low-income households out of central London. This is social cleansing. If the Tories have their way, it is what will happen in Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Newcastle. In this Parliament, more than £100 billion will be spent paying housing benefit to private landlords, and it will not produce a single new home. Congress, how can people afford to buy when house prices are rising by 5%, 6% or 7% a year and wages are growing at 1% or 2% at most?

We have surveyed our members living in London on housing costs. I should say, first of all, that these statistics probably hold true in many parts of the country, whether it be in the cities or the countryside. I know from my UNISON colleagues that one of the biggest mismatches between local wages and house prices is in the south-west of England and in London. More than 100,000 public services told us this. Our survey has shown that shown that 63% said housing costs means that they are looking to move their home or job, 87% of health workers in the private sector said they were looking for somewhere new to live and work and 24% said they were struggling to manage. That figure rose to 65% who were struggling if they were tenants of a housing association. Two-thirds of all respondents said that they were spending over a third of their income on housing in London. Congress, wherever you are from, we need local workers to have a chance to live near where they work and be living in the communities they serve. This motion provides the basis for the TUC to play its role in ending and dismantling the current approach to public housing and to see the beginning of a new era of providing good quality and safe council housing and housing association homes, with good space standards at rents that people can

actually afford. Please support the right to a roof over our heads in the 21st century.

Support the motion. (*Applause*)

Jane Taylor (*Unite*) seconded Motion 3. She said: I am a homeless officer from Bristol City Council. Congress, tackling the housing crisis that continues to envelope our communities has become one of the most pressing issues of our time. For ‘generation rent’ living in secure homes and working in secure jobs, for families forced into B&Bs, for adults continuing to live in their childhood bedrooms, for young people being denied housing benefit, for the millions living in homes not fit for habitation and for the growing number of homeless people in our streets, the time for action is long passed.

The Labour manifesto is committed to increasing council house building, a recognition that council housing has a crucial role to play in ensuring that everyone has a home, a home that is affordable, warm, secure and where you can build a family. Councils also need to be able to suspend the right to buy. Directly investing in housing makes social policy sense. It makes economic sense. Housing is one of the clearest examples of the folly and narrow-mindedness that prizes the commitment to the market above all else. Because housing is a central driver of economic growth, and through public investment we can ensure that it is investment that creates good jobs and apprenticeships as well as homes for all.

The new housing consensus that we want to forged must reverse the trend in privatisation and marketisation that has scarred the provision and quality of one of the most basic human needs. We must also invest in a consensus on how houses are built.

The fragmentation and casualisation of the construction industry denies workers their employment rights and has contributed to the massive decline in apprenticeship numbers.

As a movement, we have changed the terms of debate on housing. Now we need to push forward and ensure that action is taken to end the housing crisis. Please support Motion 3. (*Applause*)

Louise Atkinson (*National Education Union*) spoke in favour of Motion 3.

She said: Congress, recent research from Shelter suggests that 41% of homeless households are in fact in work. It is an utter disgrace that working people cannot afford decent housing. Carol Hanser of the Education Support Partnership recently publicly stated that they are very concerned to see an increase in homelessness amongst education professionals, including teachers. The charity Turn2us has also reported that teachers are second only to nurses in their list of professionals turning to them for support and advice regarding financial hardship. The fact that comparatively well-paid professionals, such as teachers, are part of the trend in working homelessness is a clear sign of the depth of the current housing crisis.

As the public sector pay cap keeps annual wage increases below the rate of inflation and well below the rapid increase in housing costs, the situation is not only having an impact on the teacher recruitment and retention crisis, but it is also directly impacting the quality of education that many teachers are able to provide for their students. Teachers who are unable to live near to their schools are travelling for hours before standing in front of a class. Teachers living in cramped and unsuitable housing

conditions are unable to effectively carry out any lesson planning or marking at home. Worse still, they are unable to provide secure and stable homes for their own families.

As a child growing up under Thatcher's regime, I spent many years as part of a homeless family and I can tell you it is no fun. As we were moved from rented houses to hotels to hostels, I attended nine different primary schools. This lack of consistency and stability had an impact not only on my education but on my ability to build and maintain relationships. It breaks my heart now, 30 years on, to see the families of children I teach experiencing the same issues that I did as a child as a result of insecure housing. This September I lost a young girl from my class. She was happy, settled and thriving in our school. Why have I lost her? Why has she had to move to a new school? Simply because her family, which is a working family, could not afford to continue to pay for the rent on their home. I can't do anything to help that family's situation, but I can try to help families in the future by strongly urging you to support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Brian Cookson (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) spoke in support of Motion 3 on Building a new housing consensus. The NASUWT believes that the failure of the Conservative-led governments since 2010 to address the escalating housing crisis is having a profound and lifelong effect upon the futures of hundreds of thousands of children and young people in the UK today. The issue of housing is often portrayed as simply being about the need for young adults to get on the property ladder without exposing the pressing need to renew and add to the housing stock of the UK. For workers, such as teachers and nurses, the need to be able to obtain affordable housing is a pressing concern, and there is no light at the end of the tunnel. The situation daily

gets worse. The real term “cuts to public sector pay”, together with the failure of the Government to provide a credible housing policy or strategy, has left young teachers priced out of the market. They are forced, sometimes very long-term, into totally inadequate housing or, should I say, “accommodation solutions”, that adds unacceptable stress to an already highly demanding profession. The failure to address this issue is putting a huge strain on public services and putting those services under threat. Research by Shelter has also found that bad housing affects children’s ability to learn at school and study. Since 2010 this situation has gone from bad to worse. In a survey conducted by the NASUWT a third of teachers surveyed had seen one in four pupils, who had left or arrived mid-term because they were forced to leave their homes or who had lost their homes due to financial pressures, and one in three had seen pupils who had been living in temporary accommodation. This, understandably, has huge implications for their ability to focus on learning as well as presenting other issues that children should not have to face, all of which have life-long implications. The NASUWT welcomes this motion to campaign for urgent action to address the housing crisis. Congress, please support the motion. (*Applause*)

The President: UNISON, as no one has spoken against, will you waive your right of reply? (*Agreed*) Thank you. Will all those in favour, please show? Will those against, please show? That is carried unanimously. Thank you, Congress.

- *Motion 3 was CARRIED.*

President’s address and vote of thanks

The Vice President: I now call upon the President to address Congress. (*Applause*)

The President: Congress, what an honour it is for me, as President, to chair the 2017 TUC Congress here in Brighton. We are here to make TUC policy, and I expect this Congress to be full of well informed and passionate debate. This is our shop window on the world. Here we speak about the issues which are so incredibly important – about good work, about fair pay, about the kind of society that we want for ourselves, for our friends, for our families and for our children.

The theme of this year’s Congress — it is on the Congress badge — is “Changing the world of work for good”, and that is at the core of everything we do. If the TUC and the trade union Movement is not about changing the world of work for good, then we are about nothing.

Comrades, the Government should be ashamed that in a country which is the fifth richest in the world, so many citizens are insecure. So many do not know what will be in their wage packet from week to week. So many work all the hours God sends but cannot make enough to make ends meet. I know about the effects of insecure work from a very personal basis. A young person I know very well — she is in this hall — found herself, after several years working abroad, returning home and looking for temporary work. She took a job in a café where she was paid just £8 an hour, and that was in central London. You can’t live on £8 an hour in central London, or you can’t live well on that rate anywhere else.

But it was the working practices in this café that were even more shocking than the rock bottom wages. A camera permanently on so that the absent owners could see how busy the café was, and ring up to send employees home if business was slow, but not pay them for the hours they were expecting to work, were ready to work, but were required to sign off because business was too slow. All employees are required to be part of a WhatsApp group, constantly on call, bombarded with questions from the owners about why the takings for the morning were £1,54 out; or why the coffee machine had not been cleaned properly. Congress, it was shocking. Exploitation was taking place before my eyes to someone I love dearly, and I am sure that many of you know of this exploitation to young people who you know dearly, too. That is how it is for hundreds of thousands of young workers who have borne the brunt of austerity and are now on the frontline of a low-paid, insecure working environment which gives them no prospect and no promise of a decent life.

My close knowledge of the experiences of one young work has prompted me to take a special interest in the TUC's young workers' project, because there is no doubt, comrades, that we face a real challenging in organising young workers. Less than one in 10 of Britain's young workers in the private sector are in a union, and in the public sector, where trade union density is higher, it is at its lowest for young workers. And yet, these are the workers who must need to be in a union, so they can organise to make their world of work better. So, why is it, Congress, that young members are not joining trade unions?

The simple truth of the matter is this: too many young people do not know what a trade union is, never mind what the benefits of being a trade unionist are. The

majority of these young people work in sectors like retail, hospitality and privatised social care where unions can be a very rare beast, hard to see in the forest of poverty and poor work that surrounds them. When the TUC asked hundreds of young workers about their experience of work, there was a strong perception — it came through time and time again — that unions are for others, not for them: unions are for the public sector, for those in careers rather than jobs.

The TUC's research reveals that young workers don't identify as having problems at work because they have low expectations about what work can offer, and they have a lack of trust and a sense of futility, because when they've tried to change things in the past nothing has happened. That's why the TUC's new campaign plan has young workers as one of its top priorities. That is why we have got to get together behind the TUC's new young workers' campaign — to rebuild our membership among the younger generation. It is a matter of not just delivering the fairness, equality and justice that young workers deserve, but rebuilding our collective strength. The young deserve no less. They suffer from the most rampant inequality and injustice, and I know this to be true, not only from my own personal but also from my own professional experiences.

Congress, I have worked all my life in education, for many years as a teacher, and I am passionate about the power of education to transform lives. For the past eight years, I have been chair of the Unionlearn board, and it is a role which I hold with great pride. Through unionlearn, unions have become one of the most successful providers of education to workers, and in particular those workers who need reskilling and retraining the most, but who most often miss out. Unionlearn recently celebrated

its 10th anniversary, and in that time we've helped well over two million workers to learn and become more skilled. That is an incredible achievement. We should be incredibly proud of Unionlearn. This is a form of learning which engages the hardest to reach parts of the workforce — the low skilled, low paid workers, who often have complex learning needs, including poor literacy, poor numeracy and IT skills.

As a teacher, I also know, from first-hand experience, the ways in which poverty impacts upon young people. We have hear some of that in the first debate today. How is it that now, in 2017, one quarter of the UK's children live in severe poverty? Poverty which means that by the time poor children start school there is a huge gap in attainment between them and their more advantaged class mates. Poverty robs children and young people of their potential and blights their future lives, so how is it that child poverty, on an industrial scale, is in any way acceptable today? (*Applause*)

I am the seventh of eight children. My father was a headmaster (yes, he was a headmaster) of a primary school on one of the poorest council estates in Bolton. It is the school to which most of my brothers and sisters went, and my father often said that it took a war and rationing to feed all the children properly. He said that that was a disgrace.

But I tell you now, throughout the UK there are thousands of children who go to school hungry and who dread the school holidays because they won't get a decent meal all day or all week. They dread the boredom of the holidays — weeks stretching ahead with nothing to do and no money to do it with.

Being the seventh of eight children is a bit of a challenge. There's a lot of competition between siblings, but it was in my family that I learned very early on the importance of collective action, that when we worked together towards a common goal my brothers and sisters were an unstoppable force (well, we were unstoppable until we met the combined might of my parents). It is this belief in the power of collectivism, of supporting one another, and of working together in the workplace, which powers all of the unions here today. We know that alone we can do something, but together we can do great things. And this year, unions have done great things, momentous things, to fight injustice and to make the world of work better. Just think of the UNISON victory in the Supreme Court, which abolished tribunal fees. *(Applause)* Then there is Unite's fight to secure the minimum wage for thousands of workers at Sports Direct's Shirebrook warehouse in Derbyshire, securing an estimated £1 million in back payments and humiliating the odious Mike Ashley into the bargain. *(Applause)* Think of the NASUWT's victory against the Sixth Form College Association on what the Supreme Court judged to be the unlawful deduction of strike pay. *(Applause)* All of these legal actions show that unions are vital to defend legal protections on workers' rights and — let's be clear — there were no other organisations waiting in the wings if unions had not stepped up to the mark.

But we are not only winning through the courts. Unions are finding new ways to mobilise members and to reach out to the wider public. Think back to the election campaign — school funding became one of the key issues, rivalling the NHS in voters' list of concerns. This prominence was almost wholly down to the coalition of education unions, led by the NUT, highlighting the scale of the cuts facing schools, and the broad-based campaign, involving parents' groups, which demonstrated to

politicians of all parties that education matters, that schools matter and they will not accept devastating cuts to our schools. (*Applause*) We know from opinion polling that of the many voters who changed their minds during the campaign one in 10 gave the reason as school funding. The school cuts video received 4.5 million views and over 100,000 shares. The School Cuts website did something really rather brilliant — it translated the £3 billion real-terms cuts in school funding and demonstrated just what that mean for every school in England. All school leaders and parents had to do was to type their school's name into the search engine to discover the exact amount of money that that school would lose under the Conservative funding proposals or how much that school would gain under Labour's proposals.

Congress, I have been the general secretary of ATL for the past 14 years. It is a union which I have been incredibly proud to lead. On 1st September I became joint general secretary with my friend, Kevin Courtney, of the National Education Union. I look forward to the changes a union with over 450,000 members — the largest education union in Europe — can make to an education sector which has been ground down, as has health, the prison service, the probation service and so much else by ridiculous, ill-thought through and badly delivered public service reform.

I want our 149th Congress to be a time where we discuss, debate and decide TUC policy. I also want it to be a Congress where, whatever differences there are between us, we always remember that there is far, far more that we have in common than anything that divides.

My parents, good Catholics, taught me that it is a mortal sin to vote Tory. (*Laughter and applause*) It's a moral imperative from which I have never wavered.

The general election result brought Theresa May from hubris to humiliation. She thought that she could turn the UK into a one-party state. Now she is forced to rely on a right-wing, homophobic, nasty party to stay in office. Truly, Theresa May is caught between the Devil and the DUP. (*Applause*) But if we are going to overthrow this nasty Tory government, we know that we have to organise.

Friends, the only way to respond and to build against the vicious Trade Union Act is to build back stronger, by organising, by mobilising and by reaching out to those workers most in need of our solidarity.

Next year the TUC will be marking its 150th anniversary, and what better way to mark that occasion than by showing that a movement forged in the industrial revolution can thrive amidst the information revolution? I'm confident that we can do it by fighting for great jobs and wages, by speaking up for decent homes and services and by remaining true to our trade union values and beliefs. Together we can build a fairer economy. Together we can nurture a more equal society, and together we can win the justice that working people crave. Let's make this Congress the platform for our action in fighting for fairness, equality and justice at work and for all our citizens. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Vote of Thanks to the President

The Vice President: I call upon Kevin Courtney to move the vote of thanks to the President.

Kevin Courtney (*Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union*) said:

Congress, in some ways we are the newest affiliate to the TUC. I am extremely proud to be moving this vote of thanks to my friend, Mary Bousted, for the way she has carried out the duties of President of the TUC this year. Following that fantastic speech, I've got the easiest job of Congress. I have seen some of Mary's work as President of the TUC first hand, as you have. I have heard her speech here. I have been on the General Council where I have seen her chair. In all of that, I think she has contributed to that in the same way that she has just done in that speech, fair and balanced, firm and decisive, with the widest view of the interests of the trade union Movement and of our members at heart. There are parts of Mary's work during this year that I have not seen. She has been at meetings with Government ministers, with Francis and on young worker orientation days. I have not seen that at first hand, but I have had reports of that. I have seen Mary elsewhere, so I know that the things I have seen of Mary elsewhere have been the way she has carried herself in those other things. With Mary, what you see is what you get. She is straightforward, she is principled, she is passionate, she is a huge defender of education, of the rights of children, their teachers and other education workers. She is a defender of a more civilised world, and she is a defender of the rights of all trade unionists. Whenever you meet with her, with our opponents, she is always prepared. She is always well read. She is indefatigable. She is a very good friend to have; she's not a very good enemy to have. Ask Ofsted. Mary's lambasting of Ofsted is because she believes it to be as the fundamental cause of excessive teacher workload. She describes them as

“under researched, under intellectualised and under theorised”, and the only organisation that inspects people that is afraid of being inspected itself. Every time Mary says that teachers cheer and Ofsted fear. Ask Nick Gibb, the Minister of State for Schools. I was at a meeting with Mary with Nick Gibb where Nick Gibb made the most absurd claim that the growth of worksheets in classrooms is due to the progressive spin situation in university teacher training colleges, not because they have cut back all the money. Apparently, it’s not because they have cut back all the money and we haven’t got any textbooks. They keep changing the curriculum and we can’t keep up. Nick Gibb was blaming it all somewhere else. Mary started her response to him — I kid you not — by banging her head on the table. (*Laughter*) Then she lambasted him for several exciting minutes. He was wrong and after the end of those few minutes he knew how bloody wrong he was. I’ll tell you what. That was not out of control. That was Mary being determined, passionate and decisive. It was Mary being effective. That is Mary to a tee.

Mary said something about her previous life. She has been a trades unionist all her life. She was a teacher of English in the early 1980s when she was a member of the NUT. She was a teacher-educator in the 1990s and early 2000s when she was a member of the Association of University Teachers, now UCU, and then leader of ATL since 2003. She has been a great success in all of those roles.

A few years ago at Congress, Shami Chakrabarti, then Director of Liberty, was down for a fringe meeting, and I knew nothing of this history. Mary was Shami’s English teacher in secondary school, and Shami was full of so much praise for Mary’s role as a teacher, for the passion she had in that, for the way that she taught critical thinking

to children and taught them to challenge and for the encouragement she gave to Shami, in particular. I think the role that she has played at the ATL — we all have to think this if we step back — has meant that we have to say “What a fantastic role it has been”. She has led the introduction of the Organising Agenda into the ATL. She pioneered the use of CPD in the ATL as a way to reach hard-to-reach teachers. She led the ATL in its first ever national strike action. (*Applause*)

In June 2011 ATL, led by Mary, alongside UCU, PCS and the NUT, had strike action against public sector pensions. We struck again with most of the public sector in November 2011. We did not win everything we wanted to win. As to the concessions we got, those concessions are the ownership and the property of everyone who took action, but I can tell you that there is no single person who deserves credit for them more than Mary leading an ATL that had never taken national strike action before through that movement. I think she has played a blinder in ATL. I believe that she has contributed a huge amount to the TUC through her work on the Unionlearn board and in the way she has conducted herself as President this year. I am proud to call her a friend, I am proud to be joint general secretary of the National Education Union with her and I move the vote of thanks. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The Vice President: I now call upon Sue Ferns to second the vote of thanks to the President.

Sue Ferns (*Prospect*) seconded the vote of thanks to the President. She said: I am delighted to second this vote of thanks to my colleague and friend, Mary. Mary and I have known each other for quite a while and in a number of different capacities; on

the General Council and Executive Committee, on the Unionlearn board and through Unions 21.

Let me say, first of all, that Mary is not only a good speaker, speaking from the heart, as you have heard this afternoon, but she is also a very effective doer. From time to time, she is a woman on a mission.

Since Mary became General Secretary of ATL in 2003, she has been very effective. You might not know, and quite unusually, this was Mary's first paid trade union role, so she was a new broom in every positive sense of the word, bringing enthusiasm, commitment and ambition not just to a new organisation but to the wider movement. Of course, Mary also brings her depth of knowledge, born from 21 years as a school teacher and university lecturer, and that makes her a formidable advocate for her profession. This was well and truly demonstrated on Radio 4's *Today* programme, when she got into something of an argument with the presenter about the merits or otherwise of teaching false phonics as a method of learning to read. The interviewer made the mistake of querying Mary's qualification as a trade unionist to pronounce on this matter. Mary, quietly, pointed out that she does have a degree in the subject, and he quickly moved on to something else.

As Mary has said, her commitment to learning for everyone has also shone through her work on the Unionlearn board, which she has very successfully chaired through really difficult times since 2009. During that time she has worked with and seen off no less than five Skills Ministers. Perhaps her toughest test was in 2010 with a new Minister at the helm after the election when the battle to sign off the Union Learning Fund

project went on for months and months. So it is a real tribute that still, every year, more than 220,000 people are given training and opportunities through the union route. So I think we should give a big shout out to the work of Unionlearn and to Mary's leadership. *(Applause)*

It comes as no surprise that, as a former teacher, Mary has a well-developed sense of when detail and process is important and when it becomes an end in itself. I have it on good authority that Mary's tolerance was tested to the limit one day on TUC business in Brussels, a day that involved, shall we say, less than scintillating presentations on technical issues around the structure and practices of the EU. I understand that this sparked a long and heated discussion with trade union colleagues that went on over a dinner of mussels and beer. When Mary, uncharacteristically, arrived a little late for the meeting the following morning, she blamed it on the mussels, as you would. *(Laughter)*

Mary is, clearly, a strong woman, but in the best traditions of sisterhood, she appreciates the support of other women and generously offers her time to do the same for the next generation of women leaders. I have seen it myself and I have heard it from others. Mary, it may not be in the limelight but it really does matter.

Finally, let me say that I have a son who last week started his NQT year as a primary school teacher. I am really pleased that he will have the guidance and support from you, Mary, and colleagues, in the National Education Union. I know that you will also guide us successfully through the business of Congress this week. I hope you enjoy it. *(Applause)*

The Vice President: Thank you, Kevin, and thank you, Sue. Back to the President.

Brexit

The President: I can start recognising myself again. Delegates, we move to section 2 of the General Council Report: Brexit from page 30 of the report. Congress, the General Council is still to take an attitude on Composite Motion 6: Influencing the Brexit deal. This composite will be scheduled to be taken later in the week. I will now explain how I intend to take the Brexit debate this afternoon. I will take the General Council's Statement on making a Jobs-First, Rights-First Brexit a Reality; Composite Motion 5, Brexit, the Single Market and workers' rights; Motion 21, Implications of Brexit for STEM, and Composite Motion 7, Free movement of labour and EU workers, as a single debate, along with paragraphs 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 of the General Council's Report. First, I will call Steve Turner to move the General Council's Statement. I will then call the mover and seconder of Composite Motion 5. I will then call the mover and seconder of Motion 21, followed by calling the mover and seconder of Composite Motion 7. Then I will call their supporters. After that, I will open the debate to other speakers. After that, the mover of Composite Motion 5, Motion 21, Composite Motion 7 and Steve Turner, on behalf of the General Council, will have the right of reply in that order. We will then vote on the General Council Statement, Composite Motion 5, Motion 21 and Composite Motion 7, in that order. Congress, is that clear? *(Agreed)* Thank you.

General Council statement: Making a jobs-first, rights-first Brexit a reality

Steve Turner (*General Council*) moved General Council statement: Making a jobs-first, rights-first Brexit a reality on behalf of the General Council.

He said: Firstly, can I thank all of those colleagues on the Executive Committee and the General Council itself who contributed to the debate, and this statement as well, getting us to a point where, despite the wide and differing-held views that we have in our Movement, we have a statement in front of us today that we believe unites us. Comrades, it is not perfect, but as trade unionists it is our job — in fact, it's our duty — to ensure that when we leave the European Union we do all that we can to protect jobs, fair trade and, indeed, of course, workers' rights. We have a duty and a responsibility to reject the collective experience of over six million trade unionists, working people, into that debate to ensure that our voices, our concerns, our fears and our aspirations are not ignored, to protect decent, safe, well-paid unionised jobs, to ensure a level playing field on workers' rights, rights that generations of trade unionists have fought to secure both here in the UK and in Europe, to secure trade and, with it, on-going access to our largest market, protecting millions jobs dependent on barrier-free, tariff-free trade. Of course, we also have a duty to protect long-fought for consumer and citizen, environmental and human rights, alongside fair migration rights for both the UK and European citizens.

Congress, the TUC, like my own union, Unite, campaigned to remain in the referendum. We didn't do that because we believe that the EU is perfect, but because we believe, as Labour did, in a strategy that kept us in the EU but with a transformative agenda. Of course, Congress, we lost, and we get it. Millions of people against an out-of-touch political elite that had ignored our communities, the poverty of isolation, detachment and growing despair for generations. They voted to

reject Tory austerity as much as Brussels' bureaucracy, austerity that continues to attack wages, close local services, underfund our NHS, attack our welfare state and drain our people of hope.

Congress, a Brexit that leads to economic crisis, on-going attacks on our rights and undermines good secure jobs will do nothing to address people's genuine fears and concerns. With no progress in Brussels and the clock ticking, it is clear that the Tories are a party at war with themselves, with a Cabinet more interested in self-preservation and divided by leadership ambition and securing a Europe protecting our interests, putting at risk the Good Friday Agreement and peace in Ireland, fuelling the language of hatred and far-right activity in our workplaces and communities. Congress, this Statement sets out clearly our tests for what a Brexit and a future people's Europe must look like on jobs, trade, rights, on ending the failed politics of liberalisation and economics of austerity, as well as ending the exploitation of migrant labour by abusive bosses.

We demand a negotiated settlement beyond the transition period that provides long-term tariff-free fair trade with our largest market, trade that protects our economy and allows us to fund the decent public services we rightly demand. Congress, this Statement tackles the hard questions that our Government won't. It is honest with our members in a way that the Government are not. Of course, there are many ways to secure a settlement that meets our tests, but right now we have to be real. We have a Tory Government at the negotiating table, we have a Repeal Bill in Parliament and we have a cabal of Brexiteers spewing cliff-edge rhetoric at the helm. We need to be

convinced of a better option than continuing our membership of the Single Market outside of the European Union.

Comrades, the General Council's Statement lays out just some of our vision, our aspiration and our intent. Now we demand a seat at that table to deliver it. I move. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Thanks, Steve. Now I call paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4, and Composite Motion 5, Brexit, the Single Market and workers' rights, to be moved by Unite.

Brexit, the Single Market and workers' rights

Len McCluskey (*Unite*) moved Composite Motion 5. He said: Thank you, Mary. Good afternoon, Congress. Brexit represents the key challenge for our movement of working people today. It is not a challenge that we went looking for. My union, the TUC and most affiliates believed that, on balance, our interests were best served by remaining part of the European Union. Mind you, we were never starry-eyed about Europe. We knew that too often the EU comes down on the side of neo-liberalism, of austerity economics and of putting big business interests first. But we back the line of the Labour Party: remain and reform. The British people decided differently, and as democrats, Congress, we must accept that fact. We must also face the fact that many of our own members voted to leave, not because they hate Europe or Europeans but because they hate what the economic system and the international elite have done to their jobs, their communities, their way of life and the prospects for their children.

We must recognise those concerns, just as Labour did so successfully during the general election campaign.

Our position on Brexit today is informed by the same concerns that we expressed during the referendum campaign — the protection of jobs and the preservation of workers' rights emanating from the EU. All of that is being put at risk by the Tories. Here we are, six months into the negotiations, with only a year left to secure a deal, and nothing has yet been agreed, even within the Government themselves, never mind with the EU. We have a divided, reckless Government without plan or purpose beyond its own survival. This approach is driving Britain and many of our key industries straight towards the precipice, placing tens of thousands of jobs in jeopardy.

Here is the real problem, colleagues. Much of the Tory Party just doesn't care. It's all collateral damage as far as they are concerned on the highway to their low-wage, low-tax Utopia, a second Singapore floating off Europe, under-cutting wages and social protection, a deregulated race to the bottom, slashing rights at work and disregarding product standards and other safeguards, as well as a Prime Minister incapable of formulating any agenda or imposing any order on her squabbling team. More than ever, it is clear that Britain cannot afford a Tory Brexit. Only unremitting pressure from the labour Movement is going to avert this catastrophe. That is why my union supports the position taken by Labour on the transition period, avoiding crashing out of the EU without a plan, by remaining within the Single Market for a short additional period.

We also support Labour in opposing the Tories' EU Withdrawal Bill, which will give Ministers powers to scrap workers' rights as and when the fancy takes them. Theresa May says that is not her intention, but calling an early general election wasn't her intention either until it suited. She regrets that decision now. Let's make it clear that if she uses Brexit as a pretext to attack workers' rights she will live to regret that, too. Beyond a transition period, however, we must honour the referendum result by returning to Britain the full powers to shape our future.

Sisters and Brothers, our best hope for workers' rights and a prosperous balanced economy is not a hard Brexit or a soft Brexit, nor a second referendum. It is a Labour Government under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, which implements the manifesto, which got so much support just three months ago and speaks so clearly to our members' concerns and aspirations. That is the best guarantee of not just the rights we have but the rights we need. That is the best guarantee of not just jobs but decent, well-paid jobs throughout the country. It is also the best guarantee of a tolerant society with equality for all.

Congress, let our whole movement unite around our basic principles and fight for the Labour Brexit which puts working people first, for the many not the few. I move.
(Applause)

Larry Flanagan (*EIS, Educational Institute of Scotland*) seconded Composite Motion 5. He said: Thank you, President. Colleagues, I would like to speak to two aspects of the motion from the original EIS submission; the protection of workers' rights post Brexit and the need to support the rights of EU nationals currently in the UK. I think

the General Council Statement, usefully, outlines the very real threat which exists to workers' rights in the post-Brexit period. Many of those rights, currently, have been located in European directives, case law or legislation. As Len just pointed out, we cannot trust the Tory Government, despite what they might say, to ensure that these rights are incorporated into domestic legislation. In fact, if you look at the history of the anti-Trade Union Act over the last period, we know that the Tories and their big-business backers will take this chance to attack workers' rights whenever they get the opportunity. So there is a very real threat to the existing rights that we have in this country. This is also, I think, an opportunity for the trade union Movement to assert itself over this agenda, to demonstrate the value of trade unions in defending, securing and enhancing workplace rights where many members, and certainly many workers, may take for granted rights which have been won by hard fought campaigns and struggles of the past. So we have to take the threat from the Tory Government and turn it into not just defence but attack in relation to ensuring we built a campaign and a profile for trade unions around workplace rights and ensure that they are incorporated into statute here in the UK. For many that will be within the UK Parliament. The EIS has very strong views that we wish to see employment law incorporated into Scottish legislation, but either way I think it is a key issue for the trade union Movement moving forward.

The second point, briefly, to touch on is the need to protect the rights of EU nationals currently in the UK. They have been used quite disgracefully as a political pawn in the Brexit discussions, but we know from EIS members in higher education and equalities the uncertainty that has been created for EU nationals working in this

country, despite some of the movement recently, who are still talking about having to leave because of the uncertainty they face.

Scotland, like many parts of the UK, is a country which relies upon migration in terms of simply operating our economy. We have a political narrative from Holyrood which is very welcoming around migration, but we do not hear anything from Westminster and the Tory Government, in particular, so we have to counter that by supporting the right of EU nationals to remain post Brexit. So in supporting this motion, colleagues, we will be defending workers' rights and defending the rights of EU nationals.

(Applause)

The President: Before I call Motion 21, I am sure you have noticed that we have been joined on the platform by Glenis Wilmott, the Sororal delegate from the Labour Party. Glenis, we are delighted to have you here and I know that we are going to hear from you later. *(Applause)*

Implication of Brexit for STEM

The President: I now call Motion 21, Implication of Brexit for STEM. The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by Prospect and seconded by the UCU.

Sue Ferns (*Prospect*) moved Motion 21. She said: Congress, you have just heard some very powerful speeches about the potential consequences of Brexit for our economy, for trade and for workers' rights. So why should you care about what Brexit means for science and innovation? Well, even without Brexit, the changing

nature of technology, an emerging new economy and global constraints on natural resources all make science key to our future prosperity. But there is sound evidence to show that international collaboration gets better outcomes. It is good for science and it is good for the economy, too. The UK's place in big science and bigger projects relating to climate, space and energy are at risk because this kind of work is only possible at the international scale. But let's bring it closer to home. Did you know that the technology for MRI scanners, the machines which help clinicians diagnose dementia and other conditions, were developed by UK businesses for CERN, the international particle physics facility near Geneva? Did you also know that there are 142,000 EU nationals employed in British science and technology, making a vital contribution to the organisations they work for? What is more, the UK received €1.2 billion from Horizon 2020 in 2015. That is one of the biggest EU research programmes and the highest amount received by any Member State.

Last week the Government published a position paper setting out their aspirations for future scientific collaboration after Brexit. It should have been a watershed moment for the UK, but, guess what, there is no active plan to back up these aspirations. So Prospect has set three tests that the Government need to pass if it is going to make a success of Brexit for science. First, the UK needs extra investment in science, not sleight of hand to re-allocate funding that has already been announced. Secondly, UK science needs the personal and organisational collaboration that programmes like Horizon 2020 bring. Relationships have already been disrupted as a result of Brexit uncertainty, with UK-based researchers frozen out of some new project bids and loss of lead-partner status elsewhere. So the Government must also guarantee the rights of

EU nationals already working in the sector and make clear that the UK will not shut the door to future scientists who want to come and work here.

The latest proposals on future residency rights do nothing to resolve the continued damaging uncertainty experienced by EU national colleagues and their families. Furthermore, they will denude the UK of much-needed skills and hurt the economy. Thirdly, the Government must do more to safeguard the scientific jewels in the UK's crown. Unless it puts aside reservations about the European Court of Justice to make sure that the UK continues to be a full member of EURATOM, we will lose the world's leading Joint-European Torus facility, otherwise known as JET. EURATOM is the body that helps protect safety of radioactive material in the EU and ensures ready access to medical isotopes, used, for example, for scans and cancer treatments.

In reality, the Government either do not understand facilities like JET and the European Medicines Agency which provide the hubs with scientific investment and skills or it is choosing, for insular political reasons, to ignore it. Yes, all of this could disappear unless there are some good answer soon, and then we will all be worse off.

At stake is the UK's ability to steer the future of science rather than leave it to others. Let's remember, we are living through a period in which populist movements sneer at expertise and where its cheerleader in the White House is visibly weakening scientific influence. That is why science is a trade union issue and that is why it is important that we all get behind the TUC campaign as we have called for in our motion. Please support it. (*Applause*)

The President: Thank you, Sue. I call the UCU.

Douglas Chalmers (*UCU, University and College Union*) seconded Motion 21. He said: Colleagues, you may be wondering what the ERASMUS scheme is. We got that amendment put in. The original Erasmus was a famous European — a Dutch — renaissance philosopher who argued against narrow-mindedness and for seeking the best from the widest of European ideas. But today it is an acronym, or actually a backronym, you might want to say, for the European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students. It was launched in 1987 in Europe and it has been going on for 30 years, and it has been tremendously positive. For instance, the risk of long-term unemployment is at least halved for mobile students compared with those who stay at home. Mobility boosts job prospects, encourages labour-market mobility and opens minds to different cultures. There is more. A third of former ERASMUS students now live with a partner of a different nationality. In fact, the Italian novelist, Umberto Eco, went as far as describing ERASMUS as “A sexual revolution sweeping Europe”. In fact, he credits ERASMUS with creating the first generation of young Europeans. He may have a point, as it is estimated that there are well over one million people born as a result of ERASMUS exchanges, as you might call it. Interesting, Eco believes that ERASMUS ideas should be compulsory, not just for students but also for taxi drivers, plumbers and other workers to help them learn more about other countries and to integrate. But, here, I think he did mean to integrate in the widest sense and not just as a euphemism for anything else.

While we in the UK seem determined to become more insular and obsessed about keeping foreigners out, we need to reflect on what our staff and students will miss out

without full access to programmes such as ERASMUS, what the impact will be on collaborative work and how much poorer we will be if we end up with a more insular outlook. We need foreign influences, we need foreign staff. In our universities there are four subject areas where a majority of staff are international: economics, chemical engineering, agri-studies and modern languages. As well as modern languages and economics, institutions are highly reliant on international staff for STEM subjects, that is science, technology, engineering and maths. So we need talent, colleagues. We need to broaden people's minds. Please support this motion. Thank you.

(Applause)

The President: I will now call Composite Motion 7: Free movement of labour and EU workers, to be moved by UCU, seconded by the CSP and supported by Equity; Musicians' Union; NASUWT and the RCM. I will then open the debate and call other speakers. So far we have got the CWU, Unite, RMT, GMB and NASUWT. Thank you.

Free movement of labour and EU workers

Sally Hunt (*UCU, University and College Union*) moved Composite Motion 7. She said: Congress, I start by asking what is the trade union and labour Movement about? What do the values that we all talk about this week actually mean for our members? I ask because I represent a workforce in which one in seven are from the European Union. They want to know why after, in many cases, decades of living here with their families they are now being treated as second-class citizens. They want to know why the Government are spinning the lie, because that is what it is, that immigration and

immigrants depress wages. They want to know just what we, this Movement, of which they are members, are going to do about it.

Congress, post-16 education is not the only sector that depends on and is proud of its diverse workforce and our many members from across the EU and the globe. Like trade union members in hotels, catering, transport, medicine, nursing, manufacturing and entertainment, we now face a brain drain, a skills' gap, which will ultimately make all of us poorer.

The question for UCU is not so much what motions we pass this week. My union represents a truly international workforce, and in truth, whatever policy we come away with from this Congress, we will carry on supporting those members the same as you will in your own unions. Whatever this Congress does, we will never in UCU stop arguing in favour of the free movement of labour, because, surely, free movement isn't just for capital and big business, is it? It has got to be for working people, too. I keep hearing arguments — I keep hearing this — that immigrants should, maybe, stay at home, building their own societies, their own economies, rather than be here, that where they are here they are taking British workers' jobs, depressing wages and undermining their rights. Seriously? Seriously, do we want to have those arguments out there? It is beyond condescending, I would say, to tell people who want to change their lives, who want to lift themselves out of poverty, that they should stay where they are, that in effect they are not welcome here. Frankly, it can, in many ways, border on racism, to blame those from other countries for depressed wages here. Congress, we know it is the employers — the employers! — who depress wages, not immigrants. (*Applause*) What we know is that

immigration is how our society is enriched. We know it is how we all learn to live with each other. It is something that we should celebrate and defend. The answer post-Brexit is not for us to look the other way while the Government tell lies about immigrants and seeks to set one group against the other. The answer is to argue and argue again for the principle of free movement backed up by fairer and stronger labour laws, stronger collective representation and international solidarity between workers. I'll say it again. Immigrants did not depress retail pay. Companies like Sports Direct did that. Immigrants did not destroy the NHS. They're saving it! It is our Brexit Government that are doing that all by themselves. *(Applause)*

Congress, I asked at the beginning what is this trade union Movement about? I'll say this. It has to be about standing up for the truth. It has to be about standing up for our members. It has to be about providing leadership, hope and solidarity for all our people — all our people — wherever they are from. Support the composite. *(Applause)*

Jill Taylor (*Chartered Society of Physiotherapy*) seconded Composite Motion 7. She said: Congress, the NHS is staff by dedicated and talented people, over a million of them, but they are over-stretched, under-staffed, under-paid and, in many cases, utterly exhausted. In physiotherapy, as in many other health professions, we are hearing increasing evidence of the problems that employers are facing in recruiting staff. Our reliance on EU workers and the contribution they make to patient care is now more important than ever. We owe the 165,000 staff from other EU countries who work in our health and social care systems and enormous debt, but to think that the debt only relates to making up the numbers would be both a mistake and an insult

to them. Their contribution goes far beyond this. Our colleagues from across the EU bring huge professional and cultural diversity to help in social care, and this is, perhaps, even more valuable than their role in making sure that staffing levels are safe and effective. They allow us to share excellent and groundbreaking professional standards across international boundaries. They help us to understand the true benefits of diversity and to be a service that is culturally competent in a globally mobile world.

Since the EU referendum last summer, we have heard distressing examples of our EU colleagues and friends being subject to racist abuse from members of the public, from patients and carers and possibly, more shockingly, even from colleagues. Whilst these examples are only a small minority, we must stand together and demonstrate zero tolerance towards any such incidents. We must all stand up and be counted by supporting and speaking out for our colleagues from across the EU and beyond.

I urge all affiliates with members in the health and social care fields to support the work of the Cavendish Coalition. The Coalition recognises the vital contribution of workers from the EU and beyond to providing high-quality care to the UK population and the need to ensure that the UK remains an attractive place to work and build careers. Our EU colleagues working here now need certainty about the future. They need to know that they are welcomed and appreciated as an essential part of the UK workforce. They need to know that they will have the right to remain in the UK and build a future for themselves and their families. Please support this motion.

Christine Payne (*Equity*) spoke in support of Composite 7. She said: The creative industries are now one of the most important parts of our economy. They contribute over £87 billion in gross added value, and are up there with the automotive, life sciences, oil and gas and aerospace industries. Indeed, two million people now work in the sector. It is a dynamic and international workforce and Equity is proud to represent our members working in the performing arts and media.

There are many challenges facing the creative industries because of Brexit. Nearly 10% of life arts organisations currently rely on Creative Europe funding. Many others, particularly small theatres, make use of European social funding and other European means of financial support. Without these funds, and in an environment of severe local authority cuts, many local arts are going to struggle.

Film and television also face an extreme uncertainty, particularly the successful industry that has emerged in Northern Ireland. Productions, such as *Game of Thrones*, have provided a massive boost to the local economies and have created loads of jobs for workers on both sides of the border. We urgently need firm guarantees about freedom of movement throughout Ireland in order to ensure the future of this work.

Performers are some of the most mobile workers in the economy, not just actors but dancers, models, audio artistes, circus and variety artistes regularly work across the EU. Equally, many EU and international creative workers train, live and work in the UK and why do they do this? They do this because the UK is one of the centres of the world's creative economy. Creative workers are highly skilled but because of their

unpredictable income and unpredictable working patterns, they do not always fit neatly into Home Office criteria for existing, let alone any future, visa regimes possible under Brexit.

Alongside other unions involved in this debate, we are also calling on the Government to secure the future of EU workers living in the UK, and we are also calling on the Government to make use of the expertise we have in our unions. In our sector, DCMS has had a dialogue with employers and funding bodies through the Creative Industries Council, and we think that it is time that the unions were invited to join them. Please support. (*Applause*)

Kathy Dyson (Musicians' Union) spoke in support of Composite Motion 7, free movement of labour and EU workers and, in particular, the importance of free movement for performers.

She said: We, at the MU, are lobbying for a reciprocal free movement for musicians and performers across the EU's 27 Member States in the form of an exemption from visa and work permit rules. Why? Around 70% of professional musicians rely on touring and travelling to sustain their career and most tour Europe. Our members work in large and small orchestras, bands of all kinds, and in collaborative European projects.

Most of the professional jazz musicians I know – and I am a jazz musician myself – have been performing at major jazz festivals in Europe for the past three months. My Twitterfeed, Instagram and Facebook have been chock-a-block with happy, smiling faces of bands playing to huge audiences; touring cars, vans and buses criss-crossing

Europe; the issues of travelling in the holiday season; and instruments on planes. There has been a huge amount of activity over the summer for our musician members in Europe. This is a slice of vibrant cultural exchange and creativity and it is all put at risk by Brexit.

The logistics of touring are finely-tuned and the costs are high. Many bands and orchestras tour Europe because it is near, it is relatively cheap and it is easy to do. Visas and work permits for non-European countries can cost between £600 and £1,000 per person and take up enormous amounts of time to administer. However, it is not just about the money. We British musicians benefit hugely from collaborative projects, cultural exchange and from working with EU colleagues. Many dates for orchestras and soloists are also organised at short notice, precluding lengthy visa applications. Cultural exchange is vital for creativity, for understanding other people, but most of all it makes the world a better place.

We constantly hear recently about the gig economy. The Tories blithely talk about the gig economy as if they know anything about it. At the MU, we are annoyed about this because they have misappropriated our word. We, at the MU, have forgotten more about the gig economy than the Tories will ever know. A warehouse worker at Amazon, on slave wages and a zero hours contract, is definitely not doing a gig. The real gig economy is reliant on reciprocal free movement and European touring to work creatively and to earn money. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

Peter Taylor (*NASUWT, The Teachers' Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 7, the free movement of labour and EU workers.

He said: Congress, it is right, of course, that as a trade union Movement, we work to ensure that all workers, whether they are from the UK or elsewhere, do not pay the price of Brexit. As a trade union Movement, we must also campaign to defend the rights of the public, who depend on the public services our members provide.

Colleagues, by passing this motion, we will commit to protecting jobs and living standards and we will be campaigning to ensure that our public services are not sacrificed during the uncertainty of Brexit. The UK's future post-Brexit depends upon us having a society and an economy that works for everyone. That means investing in high-quality public services and ensuring that our public services continue to deliver for everyone.

Whilst the Brexit negotiations continue, we must have a government which addresses the public concerns which resulted in the Brexit decision. These are concerns such as job insecurity, declining pay and living standards and underinvestment in public services. These remain the continuing challenges that still exist one year after the Brexit vote. Job insecurity is not only problematic for the individuals faced with this lack of certainty, but it is also an issue for the long-term sustainability of a healthy economy. Government austerity is continuing to impact adversely on family incomes with households facing the biggest income fall since the 1970s and increasing levels of child poverty. The Government needs a coherent Brexit strategy which not only addresses the challenges and uncertainties associated with leaving the EU, but is also predicated on increased investment in public services and delivering better living standards for all.

Taking education alone, investment is directly linked to greater prosperity for all. Congress, our members cannot wait. We must demand that the UK Government and administrations act immediately to end the failed and wasteful policies of austerity, deregulation and market-driven reforms and deliver greater investment for our beleaguered public services. We must also campaign to ensure that public funding is used in the national interest to protect jobs and living standards for all. Congress, please support this motion. (*Applause*)

Jon Skewes (*Royal College of Midwives*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 7.

He said: Congress, in this country we are already 3,500 midwives short in terms of the needs of the NHS and there are up to another 2,000 midwives who come from other EU countries. Those people are at risk at the moment. We run the risk of our NHS simply not having enough professional, clinical and support staff. There are almost 800 paediatricians, almost 54,000 nurses, over 300 cardiologists, 200 cancer specialists, 200 paramedics, many physiotherapists, radiographers and so on in the NHS who come from other EU countries. I think you get the picture.

“There is no need to worry”, I am sure you are thinking, “We are not going to be deporting people post-Brexit. We are not going to be building a wall and we are certainly not asking the Mexicans to pay for that wall!” However, there is no need. Those EU nationals, trained and ready to work as midwives and health professionals, are already under threat. They do not know what their future holds and they are not coming to this country any longer. They look at Britain and many now see a big sign saying, “You are not welcome here.”

In June of last year, taking my own profession of midwifery, there were 36 EU midwives who applied to go on the register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council when the referendum took place. In June of this year, that was down to two, so there has been a huge decrease in the number of people applying to come here to take up much-needed roles, and this is before we have erected any bureaucratic obstacles to incoming EU nationals. Our EU midwives and other staff need clarity and certainty first and foremost and at least the right to remain. It is the right thing to do and it may also help us stem the growing outflow of workers. After all, a third more EU nationals are leaving than last year.

We then have questions about things like mutual recognition of professional qualifications. Will it be easier or harder in the future for a midwife who qualifies in, say, Sweden or the Netherlands to have their skills recognised here? I have more faith in the single market, overseen by the ECJ, to protect them than a trade agreement carried out with Donald Trump, whose real intention will be to buy up the NHS.

We need to think how we can sustainably train our own midwives and health professionals, of course, but the Government is acting in a way which is inconsistent with that. It has, for the first time, just got rid of the bursary for healthcare students and is now charging tuition fees. That is hardly building up our own domestic supply. I think it is important for us, as a trade union, to speak on behalf of our members from other EU countries. If we do not, now and in the future, who will? Thank you.

(Applause)

The President: I open the debate up now to other speakers: CWU, Unite, RMT, Unison and GMB.

Dave Ward (*Communication Workers Union*) spoke in support of the General Council's Statement, Composite Motion 5 and Motion 21, but raised a concern about one aspect of Composite Motion 7, which he reluctantly opposed.

He said: Regarding the General Council's Statement, I think that Frances, Steve, Mary and all those who put the statement together deserve enormous credit for being able to put forward a position that upholds all of our values, regardless of the way we voted in the referendum. As a union, we voted to remain.

I do want to expand on a couple of points very quickly. I think that as this debate unfolds, we have to avoid a simple return to the negative debate which took place in the Remain/Leave campaigns. They were particularly good campaigns and I think they have created some of the divisions that now exist. We do not need to go back to that; we need to set out our position very clearly.

Secondly, in tandem with this Statement, we would like to see our Movement starting to talk more about reform of Europe. We want to do that on the basis of making sure that Europe moves towards a social model, as many of us originally thought was the intention. Thirdly, I want to make the point that we believe that if we have a call to action on the issue of insecure employment and on fighting for a new deal for workers (something we will be talking about tomorrow) then we have a great chance of moving this debate forward and we will influence the post-Brexit debate much more.

On the question of Composite 7, we do not disagree with anything that Sally has said, but there is a line in the composite motion which commits us, as a Movement, to supporting and defending the existing EU free movement system come what may. As a union, we agree that we must make immigration successful and it must continue post-Brexit. We agree with John's previous point that all EU nationals must have the right to remain in the UK in a post-Brexit deal. We accept completely that the immense contribution to our NHS, our public services and to the economic and cultural benefits of Britain must continue. We recognise the immediacy of some issues in education and the NHS when it comes to more workers to carry out those crucial roles.

However, we also have to recognise, as a Movement, that the issue of free movement is a touchstone issue for us as trade unions, for our members, for the country and for the Government. As written, the one line that commits us, come what may, to the existing system of free movement gives us some concern. First, we think it is a potential contradiction and it will be seen as that by the media in relation to the statement on respecting the referendum. We think it elevates it above that.

Finally, we think that it cannot be ignored that free movement without protection for workers can lead to exploitation and undercutting of pay. For those reasons, we reluctantly oppose Composition Motion 7, but support the rest of the agenda. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Andrew Murray *(Unite)* spoke in support of Composite Motion 7, but with a caveat.

He said: We fully endorse nearly all the sentiments within the composite and we certainly support the concluding list of demands without exception. In particular, we support the guarantee of the rights for existing EU citizens who have made their home in Britain. Working people and their families should not be used as bargaining chips by this bankrupt Government, which is covering up its lack of a serious negotiating strategy for the Brexit talks. This poisonous position shames Britain and the Government should abandon it immediately. *(Applause)*

However, like the CWU and Dave, who has just spoken, Unite must record a reservation over the composite's defence of the status quo on free movement of labour within the European Economic Area, seeking a continuation of existing arrangements. Millions of workers across the country know that the existing free movement arrangements have not worked for them and have been taken advantage of by the worst employers. What is needed is comprehensive labour market regulation to address the abuses of migrant labour by bad bosses and the downward pressure on wages and conditions that it has generated in some sectors.

We need a binding legal position that employers seeking to bring in labour from elsewhere abide by trade union recognition and collective bargaining agreements. With this, we can turn the race-to-the-bottom system into a rate-for-the-job society. Remember, Congress, a deregulated, so-called free labour market works no better for working people than a free market in anything else. Therefore, Unite supports this composite, but we do not support the status quo. *(Applause)*

Edward Dempsey (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*)

opposed the General Council's Statement.

He said: I am a first-time delegate at the TUC and it will probably be the last after I have finished speaking in the next three minutes! (*Applause*)

If you go to page 34, the first problem we have is this. Just after the three tests in the Statement setting out what a good deal would look like, you will see that it says, "At present, we should not rule out unrestricted access to the single market through continued membership outside the EU" They are prepared to leave that on the table as a permanent arrangement.

As far as we are concerned, the single market is the EU. We should remember how the single market came about and who was in favour of it. It was the Tories who took us into Europe. It was Thatcher who campaigned for the single market. The Single European Act was drawn up by a European roundtable of industrialists, which is an invitation-only organisation of the CEOs of the biggest multinational corporations in Europe, in order to remove democratic barriers to profit-making. That is why it was done. It was set up in those people's interests.

I have seen a lot of people get up here and say, "What is the trade union Movement about?" What we are about is extending the democratic control that workers have over industry, over our lives and over government. As far as we are concerned, Thatcherism is incompatible with that and that is what the single market is.

On top of that, we have another problem. If you go through the Statement, it talks about extending the European social model. We should remember what that is. From what you have heard up here today, there is a real focus on individual workers' rights. We should remember that as a trade union movement, as the President said when she spoke, we are a collective movement. We stand for class interests and not for individual rights, which are cosmetic.

The whole purpose of the European social model is to divert people's attention away from that. It is to refocus on individual rights and as long as we are doing that, we are not challenging the real problem, which is the private ownership of the economy, made permanent by the single market and the European Union institutions. That is the real fight.

You can have a trade union movement which is focused on consumer rights, a sort of Ann Robinson trade unionism if you want, or you can have a trade unionism that is focused on taking the economy into democratic ownership. At the end of the day, we can have these fights over individual rights with the bosses week in and week out. The real problem is the existence of the bosses. How do we get rid of them? It is by taking the industries off of them, putting them in our control and taking the Government into the workers' control. That is the only way we can do that. *(Applause)* That is what we have got to remember.

To be honest, I can see that the General Council has done a lot of work here trying to please everyone, but I think it lacks ambition. One of the things it says is, "Let us have a look and see what the European Court of Justice is saying about workers'

rights.” You can ask people in this room what workers’ rights are. We all know what workers’ rights we want. We know what to campaign on. We should be fighting for socialism and not for collaboration with the bosses. (*Applause*)

Craig Dawson (*GMB*) supported Composite Motion 7.

He said: The GMB’s position in the referendum was an angry Remain. It was angry because, for too long, the EU had abandoned its social dimension and needed to change. As we face exit from the EU, making those changes in our future relationship with the EU is vital. The GMB wanted to see a General Council Statement on Brexit that lays out a clear vision and commitment to tackling this head-on. Sadly, this Statement is not it. Our members – and I suspect yours too – will not accept more of the same so backing the status quo will not wash. On tending to support this Statement, we can only support with serious reservations.

We accept the outcome of the referendum. What we do not accept is the mess this Government is making of the Brexit process. Along with fellow members across the country, I am sick of the uncertainty and the insecurity. We want answers to what is going to happen to our jobs, rights and livelihoods. We will never be the natural go-to for advice for the Tories (surprise, surprise), which is why we need a clear campaigning strategy on Brexit that addresses our members’ concerns effectively, along with the chaos and uncertainty that is encouraging many of the views that keeping the single market as it was is the safest option.

That might appeal to business in the UK, but it cannot be our position. We have spent hours at this rostrum challenging liberalisation and attacks on our rights and public

services through the dominance of corporate interests at the expense of our jobs, exploitation and undercutting of wages and conditions. We cannot suddenly pretend the single market was a perfect thing. We have to address the weaknesses that turned people away from the EU and ensure that vital changes are embedded in any future relationship with the EU. These problems will not go away with Brexit if left unaddressed.

So, the question from our Congress and from trade union centres across the EU must be this: how much is the internal market worth to business and how far are they prepared to go to meet our demands for a new deal to secure that access? More of the same will not do. It is time to stop the attacks on pay, jobs and public services and to ensure a level playing field on rights, pay and conditions. This includes addressing the thorny issue of free movement, which became a free-for-all so that employers could exploit and undercut workers.

Let us seek a job for all workers and end the insecurity for EU and UK citizens alike. These terms must be built into any future trade agreements and a wider relationship with the EU, but we will not get there by rolling over at the first hurdle. Any transition period must be justified with the objective of implementing specific practical measures and should not be an excuse for the Government to drag out the pain and uncertainty of their own incompetence. Congress, let us work to ensure that this General Council Statement produces a campaign action we can be proud of to defend and which is worthy of our members. (*Applause*)

Kendal Bromley-Bewes (*UNISON*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 7.

She said: Congress, health and social care services across the UK face a further range of challenges as a result of Brexit. This is exacerbated because the Government has continually underfunded these services, it has failed to provide a successful recruitment and retention strategy for a skilled domestic workforce, it has implemented a pay cap and it has driven down morale. This Government has sent a negative message to the public and healthcare workers who care for people on the front line that somehow they should not be valued as they are not worth it.

Congress, this is entirely the wrong message. Health and social care workers, alongside all those in our public services, are carrying out vital jobs, keeping these services stable and making patient safety a top priority. This is going to be even more vital in the post-Brexit era. The Government needs to commit to new funding for health and social care as part of its Brexit settlement. We need an equal emphasis on recruitment and retention of the UK health and social care workforce, alongside providing certainty for current EU workers in the health and social care services. Their job contributions, whether high or low-skilled, are crucial to delivering high-quality and safe services to UK patients.

We cannot risk patient and staff safety when the UK leaves the EU because the Government will not provide certainty for these EU workers in the UK. We saw, in the leaked Home Office document last week, the utter contempt that this Tory Government has for these essential workers. EU workers and employers are uncertain of their current and future status, leading to less job applications, and recent surveys show a rise in racist bullying of EU nationals.

Workplace xenophobia must be confronted and wiped out. The Home Office must provide clearer guidance and reassurance to employees and employers. UNISON has 70,000 members from the EU and we are working as part of the Cavendish Coalition to provide evidence-based research to demonstrate the need for a proper transition and a humane EU migration policy. It is crucial that freedom of movement should stay in place during any agreed transition period. We have been campaigning for “The 3 Million”, the grassroots EU citizens’ movement to defend both EU citizen and workers’ rights in the UK and British citizen and workers’ rights in Europe. They deserve our support and will be getting it at the Parliamentary lobby and Trafalgar Square rally on Wednesday. If you can get there after Congress finishes, please do.

UNISON is deeply concerned, under the provisions of the Repeal Bill, that ministers could ditch existing arrangements for EU citizens (such as their immigration status, right to work in the UK or rights of family members) and introduce secondary legislation regarding the future arrangements for UK and EU citizens without any Parliamentary debate or scrutiny. The Government must not modify, limit or remove the reciprocal arrangements that apply to EU citizens. Any changes or the introduction of a new migration regime must be subject to full Parliamentary scrutiny.

Congress, it is essential we get this right for our EU colleagues and for our future public services. Please support the composite. (*Applause*)

The President: There was no opposition to Composite 5 or Motion 21 so I assume that Unite and Prospect will waive the right to reply. (*Agreed*) There was opposition to Composite 7. UCU, do you want a right of reply?

Sally Hunt (*University and College Union*) exercised her right of reply.

She said: I am going to start from this point. There is not one person in this room who does not want to make sure that we have best deal for every member that we represent, not just in our own unions, but across the sector. There is not one person in this room who knows anything other than if you walk into a room and say, first off, “We are going to concede the past”, you are going to get less than the past.

This motion states, “.... defend existing free movement of labour within the EEA and publicise the benefits of migrants from across the globe” It goes on to say, “(c) for improved rights for all workers and for full recognition of safety, equality and workers’ rights throughout EU withdrawal negotiations.” We are saying that the baseline is what we have now and we go for something better.

We agree that employers and many governments have abused what should have been free rights of movement to allow workers to have good, decent jobs. Many of them have been undermined by bad workers’ rights in this country and poor representation throughout Europe. We do not accept that by saying that, we step back from what should be the starting point – the ability to maintain our members in their jobs, their families in their homes, and their ability to be respected and part of the workforce as the way forward. That is why we have phrased it as it is. We respect what the CWU say, we respect what Unite say, but we respectfully also say, “Look at what we have said. It is a starting point and we want better.”

I have sat through many debates at this Congress and I know that words sometimes are a starting point. Sometimes, the TUC, on our behalf, with our voice, cannot do exactly what a motion or a composite says. I therefore make the point that this is what we are setting out to do. We are fully aware that there is complex and difficult discussion ahead between ourselves, with employers and with the Government, but we have to give our members the strongest possible stance we can. We have to let them know that they are safe in our unions, let them know that they are in safe employment, and let them know that we will fight for them every step of the way.

There was once a very good President of the United States – not the one who is there now – who was President Lincoln. He said something very simple, which was, “Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm.” What I say is this: our members from across the EU need to know that what they have now is what we will fight for and we will fight to make it better. I urge you, Congress, to support the composite. Thank you. (*Applause*)

The President: Steve will reply on behalf of the General Council’s Statement.

Steve Turner (*Unite*) replied on behalf of the General Council’s Statement.

He said: I do not want to say too much on this, but I want to welcome the comments of support from colleagues from across the affiliates. I also want to pick up on a couple of points that Eddie made. First, congratulations on your first time on the platform. I thought it was a fantastic contribution and it certainly will not be your last here, I am sure. Indeed, I think most of us would agree with some of the sentiments and comments that you made.

I do want to pick up on the comments on the single market in particular, the General Council's Statement and the European social model. Eddie, you made reference to page 34 and I would just like to refer people to that because I do not think your interpretation of the General Council's Statement is quite right. It has been a sensitive discussion inside the TUC which has got us to this point, but the Statement is this: "We are willing to consider any proposals that would meet these tests" – these are tests on behalf of our Movement – "including negotiating a new single market relationship, or working up from a bespoke trade deal. At present we should not rule out unrestricted access to the single market through continued membership outside of the EU as this meets our tests."

There is a negotiation going on right now, but unfortunately we are not at the table. That is the reality of it. We are not there as trade unionists and nor is Jeremy Corbyn's Labour government. It is the Tories who are at the table and that is our fight. We believe that the single market is incredibly important. Free trade and access to the barrier-free single market is incredibly important for hundreds of thousands of our members in Unite, but also for millions of members across our Movement.

This is about investment decisions that are being taken now by corporations for five and ten years' time. They are meeting in boardrooms thousands of miles away from here. Those decisions will be to the detriment of our members in skilled, very well-paid unionised jobs if we do not start to fight for that barrier-free, tariff-free market, our largest market in Europe.

On the social model, I completely agree with the collective rights issue that you raised although we have got the Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations and we have got works councils. On individual rights, we agree, but they are not cosmetic to the millions of workers who benefit from all of those rights. They benefit every day through their membership of the European Union as a consequence of the rights that have been introduced.

Being a member of the single market does not stop us fighting for all of that. Socialism is an international fight. At the end of the day, this is about what we can do to defend and improve our rights here in Britain as much as in Europe. Nothing stops us fighting for those rights. They have got the right to strike in many European countries, but we do not have that here. They have the right to codetermine across much of Europe and, of course, they have the right to collective bargaining, which we do not have here on a sector-level basis. So, let us have that fight. Let us stop moaning about it. Support the Statement and let us get on with it. *(Applause)*

The President: Congress, we move to the vote on the General Council's Statement: "Making a jobs-first, rights-first Brexit a reality." Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is overwhelmingly carried.

* *The General Council's Statement was CARRIED*

The President: Can we now go to the vote for Composite Motion 5. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is overwhelmingly carried.

* *Composite Motion 5 was CARRIED*

The President: Can we now go to the vote for Motion 21? Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is overwhelmingly carried.

* *Motion 21 was CARRIED*

The President: Can we now move to the vote on Composition Motion 7. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is overwhelmingly carried.

* *Composite Motion 7 was CARRIED*

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

The President: I call now on Motion 26, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. The General Council supports the motion, moved by the Musicians' Union and seconded by Equity. This is Horace's first speech as General Secretary of the Musicians' Union so could we have a round of applause? (*Applause*)

Horace Trubridge (*Musicians' Union*) moved Motion 26.

He said: Good afternoon, Congress. The work of a trade union official is always varied and interesting. That said, I did not expect to have to argue that the instrument my member is trying to take into another country for a performance did not include in its construction ivory from an elephant, an endangered species. In fact, it was actually ivory from a long-extinct woolly mammoth. As an aside, I would just be interested in how many of you have “Woolly mammoth” on your speaker’s bingo score card!

Woolly mammoths are not an endangered species because they are extinct and have been extinct for thousands of years. However, I wonder how many of you knew that the tusks of woolly mammoths are regularly dug up in places like the Ukraine and, as previously stated, can be legally used in the production of musical instruments. Now ask yourselves how many customs and border guards would be able to tell the difference between ivory from an African elephant and ivory from a long-extinct woolly mammoth? You begin to understand the complexities of the problems that my members have when taking their precious instruments into other countries.

CITES is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and is absolutely vital in the fight to curb the harvesting of endangered species for profit. We are all, and should be, in support of CITES. However, musical instrument manufacturers are not engaged in this illegal trade and musicians should not be penalised and have their instruments confiscated simply because a customs and border official is not sufficiently trained to know that the instrument that they are looking at does not fall foul of CITES. The only way to ensure that musicians can safely travel

with their instruments during and post Brexit is to support this motion. Please support our motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Emmanuel Kojo (*Equity*) seconded Motion 26.

He said: We are very happy to be supporting this motion from the Musicians' Union as it gives an opportunity to think about the potential consequences of a badly-managed Brexit for individual workers or for those who sometimes struggle to be heard in the public debate. This may seem, on the surface, to be quite a niche issue. However, for musicians, the ability to transport instruments across borders for the purpose of touring is an essential part of being able to do your job and earn a decent living.

In my own opinion, concerns have been expressed about the continuance of the European health insurance card system. If you are a dancer, actor or other performer working across Europe, you need to be able to access affordable treatment if you sustain an injury working in, or rehearsing for, what can be a very physical job. How are you going to access that in the future?

I also think about the English-speaking theatres dotted around Europe in Vienna, Hamburg and elsewhere. Will they have a future and has anyone even thought about the effect of Brexit on them? What about improvements to the EU intellectual property laws for creative workers? They are unlikely to be at the top of the agenda for Brexit negotiations yet the digital economy is booming and urgent action is needed to ensure that creative workers, who can contribute to the success of streaming

new media products, are able to have a fair share in the profits being made in these industries.

These are just a couple of the many, many issues that exist in my sector and I am sure there are just as many in education, health, defence, finance, transport or wherever you, and your fellow union members, are working. I urge you to support this motion.

(Applause)

The President: As there have been no speakers against, I assume that the Musicians' Union will waive their right to reply so can we now move to the vote. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show? That is carried unanimously.

* *Motion 26 was CARRIED*

Address by Glenis Wilmott – Sororal delegate from the Labour Party

The President: Congress, it is now my great pleasure to introduce the first of our guest speakers, Glenis Wilmott, the Labour Party sororal delegate. Glenis has been Labour MEP for the East Midlands since 2006 and is Labour's leader in Europe. She is a proud trade unionist and has worked for many years for the GMB. She is a good friend of the TUC, having served on our Midlands Regional Council from 1990-2004. Glenis is due to retire from her role as MEP later this year and I know we send her all our very best wishes for whatever comes next. Glenis, you are very welcome and I invite you to address Congress. *(Applause)*

Glenis Wilmott MEP: Thank you, President, and good evening, Congress.

Thank you for inviting me to address you today. It really is a privilege for me to be here combining the two forces that have driven me throughout my many years in politics: the Labour Party and the trade union Movement.

I have been a Labour Party member for decades, but I have been a trade unionist for longer than that, joining up when I left school at 16. Now, I know what you are thinking: 40 years in the Labour Party; a union activist; a GMB official; and then, in recent years, a Labour Member of the European Parliament – here is a woman who has sat through a lot of tedious committee meetings. It is true; it has not always been glamorous. There have been times when I have wanted to pull my hair out. There have been times, I admit, when I wanted to pull someone else's hair out. But frustrating as it may be, if I look back at my time in the European Parliament and at my time as a trade union campaigner, I am proud of the progress that Labour and the unions have made together.

I am three weeks off my retirement so it is only natural for me to look back at how things have changed during my working life. When I first cut my teeth in politics a long time ago, it was because, like everybody here, I wanted to make a real difference, a difference to the lives of the community around me, and a difference to a world still plagued with injustice and inequality. Back then, despite what many on the right will tell us, Britain was not a better country. The romantic notion of Britain as an all-powerful nation ruling the waves, where everybody had a job and lived in a Utopian society of common sense, is not the Britain I recognise or grew up in. Many

of the rights we take for granted today simply did not exist. The concept of equality was a million miles from what we consider now as mainstream and the levels of poverty throughout our industrial towns and cities were often at intolerable levels.

There can be no doubt that since that time, those of my generation have seen Britain change for the better. It took years of struggle, from trade unions to women's groups, from pioneering LGBT campaigners to those representing the rights of minorities, but we all played our part. The struggle was hard, but progress was made. Although that struggle still goes on, there can be no doubt that we enjoy opportunities today of which those before us would never have been able to dream.

Congress, now there is a real danger that our victories and more are under threat. I am talking, of course, about the Tories' vision of Brexit. We have just been discussing it. Take workers' rights. Together, Labour and the unions can be proud of what we have delivered during our time in the EU: Working time rules, health and safety legislation, holiday pay, equal rights for part-time workers – the list goes on and on. Now, we face a genuine danger of a backward slide on some of the basic rights that keep people safe at work and have helped bring more equality to workplaces.

Here, I want to pay tribute to the sterling work that has been done by Frances O'Grady and the TUC in its efforts to stand up and defend the rights that we have won throughout Europe. Thanks to the pressure of the TUC and its unions, working together with Labour, we have forced the Government to declare that working rights will be protected. However, Congress, we have heard Tory promises before. This

Government does not have a good track record on its promises to working people: a promise to put workers on boards abandoned; a stirring Downing Street speech about fighting social injustice but no action to help people in insecure work or on zero hours contracts; no action to challenge bogus self-employment and the injustices of the gig economy; no action to tackle the growing gulf between rich and poor and the scandal of pay inequality in our country.

Let us not forget that the slashing of workplace rights was the reason that many Tory politicians campaigned to leave the EU in the first place. Just take a look at what Liam Fox had to say during his time when he was free to speak his mind from the backbenches. The man who is tasked with negotiating Britain's future trade deals was very clear in his views on deregulating the labour market. He argued that it is intellectually unsustainable to believe that workplace rights should remain untouchable.

Congress, with voices like this sat at the Cabinet table, winning the Prime Minister's ear, we will need to fight to maintain our working rights. I know that the TUC and its unions will be resolute in their defence of what we have won. I promise you that the Labour Party will be at the forefront of that campaign. But the threat of the Tory's vision of Brexit is not just a danger to workplace rights. From manufacturing to medicine, financial services to food processing, sector after sector of our economy is facing uncertainty. Investment decisions have been delayed. We already know that some companies are looking to move jobs abroad. So, let us be clear. This Government's fly-by-night negotiating strategy is a threat to jobs, it is a threat to tax

revenues and in undermining our economy, it is a threat to the future of our public services as well.

As a longstanding Labour MEP, you might expect me to see this as the most important issue facing the future of our nation, but just to be clear, I am not saying this means we should reverse the decision of the referendum or block Brexit. I am saying that the Labour Movement should not be afraid to speak up when the Government tries to undermine the things we hold dear. I am saying that this Movement should stand up for what we believe in as we take these very important next steps as a country.

I am not afraid to say that I am worried. I worry about the divisions that are being sown in our society and about the way in which our country seems to be turning in on itself. I worry that Britain is becoming a place in which migrant workers (many of them your members) are being stigmatised and a place in which injustices are no longer challenged. I have always been proud of living in a country that chooses to work with others rather in isolation, a country that is typified by its tolerance and openness. I worry that the ideals which I always thought to be at the heart of our country are being eroded. Our Movement must be willing to speak up. Our Movement must be willing to keep those ideals and values alive.

Congress, there are important lessons to be learnt from the General Election earlier this year. In the run-up to June 8th, Theresa May expected to be walking into Downing Street with a huge majority backing her plans for Britain. She had a plan for a strong and stable soundbite election, but it was not to be. Labour, led by Jeremy

Corbyn, energised people who had not seen much point in voting before. We campaigned on a manifesto which was unashamed in its belief in the public good and a manifesto which spoke to people who had felt left behind by the way politics had been done for so long. Jeremy's campaign meant that the Labour Party reached a younger generation, who felt that their country was at a tipping point and wanted to tip it the right way.

Now, Labour might not have won the Election, but we all know who lost. Yet Theresa May is still clinging on in Downing Street and our public services are clinging on for dear life, suffering from a lack of investment, a lack of support and a lack of care for the workers who deliver for the greater good of our country. So, Congress, as we gather here in Brighton today, let us be clear. Our Labour Movement, the Movement to which I have devoted my whole working life, will not stand idly by and watch the Tory Right dismantle everything we have achieved. We will not allow our public services and the people who deliver them to be taken for granted. No, our Labour Movement will stand together, defiant, determined and resolute in our support for working people. Thank you. *(Applause)*

The President: Glenis, thank you so much for that excellent speech. I am very proud and delighted to award you the Gold Badge of Congress. *(Applause)*

(Presentation of Gold Badge of Congress to Glenis Wilmott)

The President: Congress, that completes our business for this afternoon, but I do have a serious announcement to make. Due to a security alert, we have been made

aware that the Grand Hotel has been evacuated while the police and security services carry out their investigations and access to the Grand is currently closed. When leaving the Conference Centre, delegates will need to leave by the rear exits and stewards will be on hand to guide you.

Congress, that now completes our business for this afternoon. May I remind delegates that there are various meetings taking place this evening. Details of these meetings are displayed on the screens and can be found on page 11 of the Congress guide, or in the leaflet included in your Congress wallet. Congress is now adjourned until 9.30 tomorrow morning. Thank you.

Congress adjourned at 6.35 p.m.