**148th ANNUAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

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Held at:

**The Brighton Centre,**

**Brighton**

on:

**Sunday, 11th September 2016**

**Monday, 12th September 2016**

**Tuesday, 13th September 2016**

and

**Wednesday, 14th September 2016**

**…………………………………………..**

**Congress President:**

**LIZ SNAPE**

**…………………………………..**

**PROCEEDINGS — DAY ONE**

**(Sunday, 11th September 2016)**

**………………………………………**

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**FIRST DAY: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11**

*(Congress assembled at 4.00 p.m.)*

**The President** *(Liz Snape):*I call Congress to order. I have great pleasure in opening this, the TUC’s 148th Congress in Brighton, and I warmly welcome you all to the Brighton Centre.

The programme of music this week has been put together by *Music for Youth*, and many thanks today to the Junior Trinity Saxophone Quintet, who have been playing for us this afternoon. *(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 Ben Louvre of the TUC staff, could they come to the tellers’ table, please, which is located on the floor to my right.

Colleagues, may I also ask everyone in the hall to switch off the ring tone on your mobile phone, and could delegates not bring their phone to the rostrum as it does disrupt the PA system, even on silent.

If there is an emergency, you will receive instructions on what to do either from me or over the tannoy. Details of all evacuation procedures are posted up on the doors of the hall. There are no fire-alarm tests scheduled, so if you hear the alarm, it is for real. If any delegate requires first aid, requests should be made, in the first instance, to any member of the Brighton staff.

**Welcome to Sororal and Fraternal Delegates and Visitors**

**The President:** Congress, I would now like to welcome Sororal and Fraternal delegates and visitors to Congress, who are seated in the front of the hall and to my right. We are pleased to welcome guests from trade unions across the world, and we have with us the General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation, Luca Visentini, and his colleagues Eska Lynch and Kate Holman. Luca will be addressing Congress later this afternoon. *(Applause)*  Welcome, too, to our friend, John Evans, the General Secretary of the Trade Union Advisory Group of the OECD. *(Applause)* We will be joined later by many other colleagues from the International Trade Union Confederation, the DGB of Germany and the ICTU in Ireland as well as the ILO. I also want to give a special welcome to Congress’s newly-affiliated union, the Artists of England. *(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 Report on page 84, when we remember our trade union colleagues who have died during the past year. You can read more about their contributions made to the trade union Movement in the General Council Report itself. Since the Report was published, we have learnt about the very sad deaths of J.D Hopper, the General Secretary of the Durham Miners Association, and Jeff Brass, an activist and full-time officer with NATFE, now the UCU. In asking you to remember all our former colleagues, I ask you also to remember other trade union colleagues from all our unions who have died in the past year, both here and across the world. I am sure, too, that our thoughts are with those who have suffered loss through war, acts of terrorism and natural disasters during the past year. Let us, in doing so, re-commit ourselves to the cause of world peace and justice. Can those who are able to stand please now join me in standing for some quiet reflection.

*(Congress stood in silent tribute) (Applause)*

**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, GPC): Good afternoon, Congress. The General Purposes Committee has approved 18 composite motions. Composite Motions 1 – 15 are included in section 3 of the GPC Report and in the Composite Motions booklet that you have all received. The remaining composite motions 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 today agreed one statement which is on the TUC Campaign Plan. This is also included in the GPC Report.

Congress, I can also report that the General Purposes Committee has approved the following emergency motions. Emergency Motion 1 on Zero tolerance for sexual harassment will be moved by Prospect and seconded by USDAW. Emergency Motion 2 on Colombia will be moved by the UCU and seconded by Unison. Emergency Motion 3 on Review of the London Underground Ticket Office Closure Programme will be moved by the RMT and seconded by TSSA. The President will advise when it is hoped that these emergency motions will be taken.

Congress, I remind that only materials approved by the GPC may be distributed within the hall and venue. I also remind delegates that the mover of each motion may speak for up to five minutes and other speakers for up to three minutes. 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. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

Delegates, as Linda has reported, the General Council has agreed a Statement on the TUC Campaign Plan for 2016-2017. This will be taken with the General Secretary’s Address to Congress on Monday morning.

In addition to the speakers highlighted in the published *Programme of Business*, I am delighted to let you know that Angela Rayner, the Shadow Education and Equalities Secretary and the MP for Ashton-under-Lyme, and a Unison member, will be addressing Congress on Tuesday morning. *(Applause)*

Congress, in her report, Linda also reported agreement on Emergency Motion 1: Zero tolerance for sexual harassment in the name of Prospect; Emergency Motion 2, Colombia, in the name of UCU; Emergency Motion 3, Review of London Underground Ticket Office Closure Programme, in the name of the RMT. I will let Congress know when I will be able to take these emergency motions. I am hoping to be able to take Emergency Motion 1 later this afternoon. Can I, therefore, ask those unions to be ready to speak in that debate, if possible.

As Linda also reported, it is also very important to try and respect the speaking times. It is five minutes for moving a motion and three minutes for seconding.

Delegates, before we start the formal business, each delegate credential has a bar code on it, so 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. We used this system last year, so I am sure that everybody can manage it again this year.

Delegates, we now start with Section Three of the General Council Report: Good Services and Decent Welfare from page 45. I call Motion 30: A more positive approach to public service delivery. The General Council supports the motion, and it is moved by Prospect and seconded by BECTU.

**A more positive approach to public service delivery**

**Eleanor Wade** *(Prospect)* moved Motion 30: A more positive approach to public service delivery.

She said: Public sector reform under the current Government have radically cut the size of the UK civil service. The headcount is lower than at any time since the Second World War. Service delivery is suffering, and many organisations are incurring additional costs in contractors’ or agency staff. Specialist skills have been so hollowed out that the civil service is losing its ability to act as an intelligent customer. Reform of the UK civil service has been forced through with very little active engagement with the unions. Establishing union engagement to ensure proper consideration of the impact of change has been an uphill battle. So there has been a real terms pay cut of 20% because of pay restraint and increases to pension contributions. A performance-management system has been introduced that gives worse outcomes to the disabled workers, black and white minority ethnic workers and older workers. The Government have sought to make major changes to redundancy terms, even though Government ministers describe the 2010 agreement as fair for civil servants and fair for tax payers. But it doesn’t have to be this way!

Despite facing common challenges, the Scottish and Welsh Governments have generally adopted a more constructive approach to public service delivery than the UK government. In particular, both have established structures for regular and continuing workforce engagement through social partnership. In Scotland this means senior STUC representatives meeting with their First Minister twice a year, union representatives meeting the Finance Minister to give views on how to improve pay bargaining and a strategic form of civil service union reps and government meeting to discuss non-industrial matters that have economic or social impacts for members. Following the Brexit vote, this will now be held monthly.

In Wales there is an agreement between the permanent secretary and the chair of the trade unions which cascade through each director general and ministerial portfolio areas. The trade unions, working with the Welsh TUC, are accepted social partners in the delivery of public services. There is a Workforce Partnership Council, chaired by the First Minister, which meets three to four times a year. This partnership working has delivered positive outcomes for workers in the Scottish and Welsh Governments. Female representation has increased in both of the most senior grade bands between 2010 and 2015. In Scotland, Prospect’s work resulted in a ministerial pay policy that delivered a 1½% pay increase, and progression for the rate for the job is separate from the negotiation of the annual increase.

The Scottish Government have maintained their commitment to the no-compulsory redundancy guarantee, and overtime rates have been enhanced by the move to a contractual 37-hour week. The Scottish Government have also introduced statutory guidance for selecting tenderers and awarding contracts, which addresses their work practices, including the living wage.

In Wales pay progression has also been protected, and Prospect was able to protect pensions and avert redundancies when the Welsh Government’s Business Service was outsourced.

Workforce engagement is a key part of service delivery. Research by the National Institute for Economic and Social Research found that a union presence in a workplace can enhance satisfaction over pay, hours, job security and work. Good employers recognise that this supports strong organisational performance.

Devolution is a continuing process. Government policy is to expand it across English regions. This provides an opportunity to extend the social partnership working established in Scotland and Wales to another 12 areas. We must use our experiences in Scotland and Wales to evaluate, understand and share what we have learnt to support the long-term economic case for a more positive approach, irrespective of the political climate.

To this end, the motion asks the General Council to work with all relevant affiliated unions to collate and evaluate experiences across a range of sectors, to share good practice examples and outcomes and to provide guidance to support national and regional trade union engagement in England. Congress, let’s get off to a good start. Please support the motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Luke Crawley** *(BECTU, Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union)* seconded the motion.

He said: Congress, the UK Government have a very bad attitude to public services. You get the distinct impression that, if anything, they would prefer to see them all privatised. It also has an appallingly negative attitude to engaging with the employees who work in those public services and their representatives, the trade unions. As is too often the case, we need to look to Scotland and Wales where the devolved governments have a much more rational approach to public services than those who work in them. Eleanor Wade, of Prospect, who moved the motion, has spoken much more eloquently than I can about what that has meant. The levels of engagement with trade unions at every level, up to and including meetings with ministers on every aspect of public services, gives us a good example of what can and should be done in the United Kingdom and some of the benefits that might flow from that.

The motion is calling on Congress to support a campaign to try and improve that and extend it to devolution, which may or may not be going to happen, in the English regions. It is important, although it is very clear to me that it would be a struggle, to get the present Government to want to do that. None the less, it is a campaign that is worth fighting, because if you don’t fight, you can’t win.

I will be brief and finish fairly shortly by saying that Congress calls on the General Council to work with all relevant affiliated unions to collate and evaluate experiences across a range of sectors; to share good practice examples and outcomes, and to provide guidance to support national and regional trade union engagement in England. In other words, to support the general campaign to get the Government to engage. I second.

**Jennifer Brown** *(Royal College of Midwives)* spoke in support of Motion 30.

She said: RCM supports Prospects’ motion for a more positive approach to service delivery. Prospect is right to highlight the fact that both the Scottish and Welsh Governments have generally adopted a more constructive approach to public service delivery than the UK Government. They are right to highlight that both devolved governments have established structures for regular and continuing workforce engagement. The difference in workforce engagement has been exemplified by the responses of the different nations in the 2014 pay dispute in the NHS. In 2014 the NHS Pay Review Body published their report recommending a 1% pay offer for all NHS staff. The Scottish Government paid the 1% uplift immediately. The Welsh Government did not pay 1% straightaway but spoke to the trade unions in Wales to find a solution and a way forward. On the other hand, Jeremy Hunt rejected the recommendation of the Pay Review Body and refused to enter into any meaningful negotiations with the trade unions. This started a 10-month long dispute in the NHS and industrial action by many trade unions, including the RCN for the first time in our 134-year history. Eventually we won our disputes and Jeremy Hunt agreed to pay the 1% uplift to staff in England, but it showed that the governments in the UK have had good employment relationships with the workforce. The English Government clearly needs to take a leaf out of the Scottish and Welsh Governments’ book.

We are now moving to a greater devolution in England, and we will see, even further, how good relationships and engagement with trade unions is vital for ensuring good public service delivery. The involvement of the TUC and its affiliated unions will be particularly important in the discussions around devolutions in England, as we will see much more integration of provision in public health, healthcare and social care. The NHS and local governments will have to work together in financially challenging times. It is vital that unions can come together with the new bodies in regions in England with devolved responsibilities so that we can represent our members in the vital services that we deliver. That is a challenge of culture and history. It will not be about dumbing down but existing partnership arrangements within the NHS are a race to the bottom in terms of pay and conditions. We need to value social care more but also learn the lessons of long-term core private provision.

I pay tribute to the TUC for their work on brokering engagement of all affected unions within the joint new authorities and a third sector to date. This motion takes the solution forward more and joins up the different devolutions. We support the motion by Prospect and agree that trade unions should share best practice and the TUC should provide guidance to support regional trade union engagement in England. *(Applause)*

**Glen Williams** *(Unison)* spoke in support of Motion 30. He said: Congress, I am speaking as an activist currently having to deal with devolution in Greater Manchester and devolution in the Liverpool City region or, as they are known colloquially: Devo Manc and Devo Scouse.

In UNISON we have long appreciated the lessons that you have already heard about, the lessons we can learn from comrades in Scotland, Wales and, indeed, in Northern Ireland, too. But let’s be very clear, Congress. Whilst there is engagement on delivery, according to our comrades, austerity does not stop at the borders. Job cuts have been hit hard in my own local government sector in both Scotland and Wales. So we were very wary indeed when the former Chancellor, Gideon Osborne, rolled up in our north-west region imposing devolution in Greater Manchester, offering new powers, cutting budgets and imposing elected mayors. Devo Manc was the first area in 2011 to establish a combined authority, and it struck the most wide-ranging devolution deal with the Government. In Devo Manc unions have worked together through the North-West TUC to agree a workforce-engagement protocol with the interim mayor and the employers. This includes the creation of a very positive workforce engagement board, which meets regularly, headed up by the trade unions, to discuss Greater Manchester issues. Devo Scouse is now following suit, learning the lessons from Devo Manc. We are certainly not cheerleaders for devolution, but this process of serious analysis and planning of public services also presents us with some opportunities as it shows up the problems and inefficiencies caused by some key services being dominated by profit-making companies and bad employment standards.

In the Devo Manc locality plans the failings of privatisation and market forces in health and social care are highlighted. This gives unions an opportunity to shake devolution. The locality plan highlights the lack of funding in such as early years and child care. This gives us, the trade unions, the chance to shape devolution. By looking at public services more holistically across the city region, the false economy of privatisation that we in this hall have long highlighted is more visible to policymakers, and that gives us an opportunity. It is damage limitation but rather that than exchanging imposition. We must be alive to the danger that our cities will compete against each other for private investment in a way that undermines their ability to raise adequate tax revenues locally. Devo Scouse is learning the lessons from Devo Manc. I have to tell you that it is the only time that the Mancs have been ahead of the Scousers.

We are working hard to create communities that are better places for us all, better places for us all to live in and not just better places for global companies to come and make a profit. Congress, please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** Prospect, you are not taking your right of reply, I assume? *(Declined)* In that case I will move straight to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is, clearly, carried.

* *Motion 30 was CARRIED.*

**The President:** I now call Motion 31 on Well-being. The General Council supports the motion. It is being moved by the FDA and seconded by Prospect.

**Well-being**

**Fiona Eadie** *(FDA) moved Motion 31.*

She said: Congress, I don’t need to tell you how, over recent years, the civil service has delivered massive reductions in spending, yet maintained quality public services, and I doubt that I need to remind you that all of this has come at an unacceptable high cost to civil servants.

Congress, this afternoon I want to talk to you about Sada, who is an FDA member, a diligent manager, wife and mother. She is what some might like to call a career civil servant, but to ordinary folk like us she is someone who loves her family, cares deeply about her work and the positive changes that can accrue to others from her work and the decisions she makes. In short, Sada is the type of person the civil service needs: dedicated, professional, diligent and human. Her story is not atypical, with long hours, demanding ministers and an unmanageable workload. The result of this long-hours culture and loss of time with family and friends was a decreased fulfilment at work and a tough time for those who she loves. Without the support of her union and colleagues, she was on the cusp of leaving a job that she used to love. Congress, if you want an example of how to take a committed professional and grind them down, then Sada is it. The problem is that in our civil service there just isn’t one Sada but thousands like her, committed professionals for whom these pressures are taking their toll on their well-being.

FDA’s own working-hours survey disclosed a shocking picture of an unsustainable long-hours working culture within the civil service. Currently, more than one-in-10 FDA members are working the equivalent of a seven-day week every week. 60% are working an extra day every week, and half of them are unable to take their annual leave. Congress, with more cuts being called for, the FDA believes that departments need to look not just at the cost of what they do but at the level of the service that they provide as well. Is it feasible to cut ever more staff without services suffering? If departments are to make these cuts, there needs to be a realistic discussion about which work no longer needs to be done and what quality of public service provision is acceptable. How many cases should a Crown Prosecutor run at a time: 20, 50, 100? How many schools should a school inspector visit in a week: one, five, 10? How quickly should HMRC respond to queries: within hours, days, weeks or months? These are the sort of questions that departments need to answer before they make their case to Treasury. The FDA has been campaigning and calling upon the Government to match the commitments they demand to the resources they provide. We were assured that the single departmental plans would provide the detail that we had been requesting, yet when they were eventually published there was a lamentable lack of any information on how that was to be achieved. Matching demand to resources is key in any organisation, and the size of the civil service doesn’t make that any less true. Looking at a spreadsheet and simply subtracting 25% or 40% may satisfy the Treasury but it is not good enough for the public. Departments and their ministers need to be clear about what is going to be done as budgets are reduced. As I have said before to colleagues, you cannae have a Champagne service on ginger-beer money.

Matching demands to resources is vital to ensuring that civil servants don’t suffer the hugely negative and damaging personal impact that stress and excessive hours is having on people’s well-being. The FDA’s latest campaign calls on every civil service employer to compensate every civil servant for every hour worked.

The FDA asks Congress to support the motion and believes that the Government must ensure that the hours of work for public servants are monitored and recorded, ensuring that civil servants are compensated for all the hours they work and demonstrate how its commitments can be delivered within the resources allocated. Thank you.

**Neil Hope-Collins** *(Prospect)* seconded Motion 31.

He said: Prospect is more than happy to second this motion from the FDA. Our members working in civil and public service delivering the public services know all about this. It comes under the broad title of “work intensification”, and for those of you who have not come across it, I would urge you to go and read some work by Professor Phil Taylor of Strathclyde University. In essence, it is taking a manufacturing-lean approach and applying it to the delivery of public service, and it just doesn’t work!

Cuts in staff are a policy aim for this Government, and that means that they don’t care, to be frank, about what gets left and what doesn’t get done. They are blind to it, completely. Five or 10 years ago, my members working in the Health and Safety Executive in Yorkshire and the north-east were divided into seven teams of inspectors. They covered Yorkshire and Humber. There are now three teams of inspectors. As far as I know, those counties have not got any smaller. To be honest, there is still just as much work to be done. The pressures on our members just become intolerable. When we tackle managers about this, they talk with great glee about workforce planning, and they tell us that they are mapping the demographics of the workforce. They are mapping the specialist skills that they have and don’t have. Then we turn round and say, “But how many people do you actually need to do the work? How many people do you need to fulfil the public and ministerial expectation?”, and we get met with blank faces as if you don’t ask that question. That is what is scary.

We do need to monitor the work that gets done and the hours that get done, and they need to be the hours that are actually worked, not the hours that get recorded, because a lot of our members in their bid to be conscientious and deliver that public service, particularly with the impact of mobile working, will work all hours. They will pick up the emails, it’s the tyranny of the smart phone, and we need to be recording all of those hours and working to make sure that the members get paid for it. They have a performance-management system, which is not brilliant, but why don’t they start using that? You don’t get the ‘exceeded’ if you have put in excess hours. They have mechanisms available, but they are just unwilling to use them because they know that the current staffing rates are unsustainable. The level of crisis that is going to come is getting smaller and smaller because our members are not going to be able to pull them out of the fire for very much longer. We urge you to support this motion. Prospect is really happy to second it. Thank you, colleagues.

**The President:** That was perfectly timed. You do not need your right of reply, FDA. Can we move to the vote, please? Will all those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

* *Motion 31 was CARRIED.*

**The President:**  I am now going to call Motion 32: The General Council supports the motion, to be moved by NAPO and to be seconded by POA.

 **Austerity undermining the most vulnerable in society**

**Ian Lawrence** *(NAPO)* moved Motion 32.

He said: Brothers and sisters, we hear much from this Government about the need to improve public services and ensure that the family and criminal justice systems are brought into the digital age and offer the taxpayer greater value for money. It is more of the same old mantra that we have heard over many years. Of course, as we all know, the reality for our members at the front end is markedly different from the grandiose wish list that emanates from the Westminster village. Our members in the Probation Service are still reeling from the disastrous impact of the part-privatisation of their work are now living through the nightmare of a divided service, where the consequences that we warned about in terms of public safety and service provision are, sadly, now being proven.

In the field of family justice, the impact of austerity is all too apparent on our practitioner members in CAFCASS, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service, whose tremendous work with young people is critical to the well-being of thousands of vulnerable individuals. Nearly all children involved in private-law cases are vulnerable. All of them are at risk of emotional harm as a direct result of parental/adult conflict. A very large number are at risk because of adult drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, domestic abuse, including physical violence and many other forms. They need an efficient and well-resourced service to ensure their safety.

Public-law cases, all of which require a CAFCASS guardian, which can often lead to children being removed from the care of their parents and families on application by the local authority, are now expected to be completed in timescales that many of our people believe are unrealistic and allow for inadequate scrutiny of the facts before important decisions are made.

There is a significant increase in administrative and record-keeping expectations at a time when business-support staff are being reduced. Inevitably, this means that mistakes will increase. As we know, don’t we, the Baby Peter case and many others, are graphic illustrations of the tragic consequences that can occur when practitioners and managers are over-stretched.

The move to reduce the Ministry of Justice’s administrative budget by a staggering 50% is now causing a funding and operational crisis in many areas. As practitioners are caught up in an endemic long-hours culture, leading to increased sickness absence, there is a greater risk of mistakes being made, corners being cut and the quality of work dropping, causing even lower morale amongst staff. I am told it is not uncommon for CAFCASS service managers to take reports home to complete over and above their own heavy workloads in order to protect their staff as demand has risen so much and there is simply no practitioner time available. I have also heard about two separate practitioners, whose cases we will be taking up, who have, unbelievably, found themselves now subject to disciplinary procedures because they have been so busy filing reports and undertaking the orders of the court that they have been unable to maintain their own records and other mandatory tasks, such as case planning.

NAPO has recently conducted a survey among our members in the family courts section about long hours and time off in lieu. It shows, as we suspected, that when workloads are extraordinarily high people are clocking in hours that they simply cannot take because there isn’t the latitude for them to do so. This is an appalling course of events.

There is a massive commitment and goodwill among our CAFCASS practitioners, but that will be difficult to maintain if demand continues to increase and resources do not keep pace. That is why NAPO seeks to support the Congress and the TUC in bringing these examples and the ones that have been highlighted at previous motions before ministers to help us highlight them to a wider audience as well. So the message to the new ministerial team at the Ministry of Justice and the Secretary of State in particular — you must have seen Miss Elizabeth “Due course” — is that it is time to stop saying that these issues are being looked at and being reviewed, when our practitioner experts out *there* are telling you what the problems are. You need to listen carefully to what they have to say. You need to rectify the policies and problems that your Government’s austerity policies have created. I am sure Congress will support this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** I call the POA.

**Glyn Travis** *(POA, The professional trade union for prison, correctional and secure psychiatric workers)* seconded Motion 32.

He said: Congress, the motion, whilst specific to CAFCASS, talks about a wider issue, about a government that simply does not care about society in general. We have a government that is consistently driven to cut the budgets to all frontline services within the public and private sector, a government that simply ignores the plight and concerns of frontline staff, and Ian has articulated the issue extremely well, as have previous speakers when speaking to motions 30 and 31. This talks about good services and decent welfare. If we allow this Government to ignore our children and families, they will become embroiled in the wider criminal justice system, which will have significant cost to the taxpayer. Billions and billions of pounds are spent in society through the criminal justice system. With court closures and access to frontline services, we must ensure that children and families have access to justice and, more importantly, support. Short-term gains that have been achieved by austerity cuts will have long-term impacts on public services and long-term impacts on the prosperity of this country. All the more so, they will have long-term impacts on the health and well-being of the frontline staff who deliver these vital and fundamental services to our children, children who are the future.

CAFCASS talks and supports people through the family courts. They are the voice of the children. They are lost souls, children who we may well know within our community and society. Congress, I do not need to take any more time. The motion speaks for itself. Please support. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The President:** I call PCS.

**Alison Roder** *(PCS, Public and Commercial Service Union)* spoke in support of Motion 32.

She said: Conference, it is very difficult to know how to focus a speech on the effects of austerity when the impact is so severe and widespread. We could pick any area of the public sector and find comparable examples of reduced services and dire consequences for the most vulnerable members of our communities. Previous speakers have spoken eloquently about their concerns, but I would like to talk more widely on issues relating to the Ministry of Justice.

Within the MoJ buildings have been sold off, staff numbers cut and workloads increased, while the remaining staff are moved to often unsuitable work locations. It is obvious how this impacts on staff, but it also has huge implications for those we serve, the public, and in particular the most vulnerable.

You will all be aware of the impact that cuts to legal aid have had. This has had a particular effect on women who may be seeking legal advice as a result of domestic violence, which is then compounded by the cuts to related services. The impact on employment tribunals also has dire consequences for the lower paid, who are more likely to be women and/or ethnic minorities. Earlier this year we even heard of Claire Gillam, a district judge and former deputy director of the Independent Police Complaints Commission, who turned whistleblower because of her concerns about risks and staff and visitors attending court. As courts closed the work was transferred to unsuitable alternatives which were under-staffed and unsafe. There was increased pressure from unrepresented claimants on overworked staff, this in a family court setting where many cases involve drugs, domestic violence and sexual abuse. The result is an increased risk of miscarriages of justice as well as physical danger, such as death threats and hostage taking. In fact, in December 2015 the MoJ’s own figures showed nearly 7,000 knives were confiscated in magistrates’ courts in England & Wales. You cannot have a justice system where the users need the money to buy access. You cannot have a justice system which increases the risk of violent crime for victims and those employed to administer the law. Quite simply, you cannot have a justice system on the cheap. These cuts are not simply figures on a spread sheet but have a major impact on the lives of all they touch. If we want a safe, just and tolerant society, then we have to be prepared to pay for it. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**The President:**  There’s no right of reply, Ian. *(Declined)* In that case, we will move to the vote. All those in favour, please show? All those against? That is carried.

 \* *Motion 32 was CARRIED*.

**The President:** Congress, I would now like to introduce a short film which highlights the work unions have done in recent years to campaign to secure justice in workplace and our communities. Our Movement has never walked by on the other side of the road in the face of injustice, and we never will.

*(Film shown)*

**President’s Address**

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

**The President:** Sisters and brothers, what a huge honour it is to be your President, to chair this great Congress and to celebrate our trade union values. I think the film that we’ve just seen says it all. Our movement is about fighting injustice, injustice that saw thousands of trade unionists blacklisted, that saw the Shrewsbury pickets wrongly imprisoned. That led to that grotesque cover up at Orgreave. The real enemy within — the police and judiciary, who have colluded for decades.

A word, too, about Hillsborough. I was born and bred in Liverpool. It’s a city I share with so many in this room, a city that was trashed and vilified by the media — but a city that fought back, led by the magnificent Hillsborough families, and amidst their grief and sorry they let nothing and nobody stand in their way. Congress, they are an inspiration to us all, but let us, from this Congress, send a clear message not just to the Hillsborough families but to the mining communities and anyone fighting injustice here and across the globe that this trade union Movement will always stand with you. Solidarity in words, but solidarity in action. *(Applause)*

It’s been another tough year for us all, but tougher still for those we represent. Over the past year I’ve met loads of people — politicians, business leaders, the great and the good — but those who impress me and inspire me the most are the activists and our members. The people who make our movement what it is, who share our values of equality, of dignity, of fairness, and who give so much to our Movement.

When I became President last year, it all felt a bit bleak. The Tories had just won their first election for 23 years. The draconian Trade Union Act loomed on the horizon. It felt that we were under siege. But Congress, what a difference a year can make. In the past year, we held our nerve and we found our fight. That demo in Manchester, a show of strength, of defiance. The lobby of Parliament, our biggest and our best, mobilising, organising, influence, what we do best. Heart Unions Week — a clever and quirky way of reminding the world and ourselves what we stand for, celebrating our work, showcasing our wins. Congress, we should it more often.

From the outset, those Tories with their sneering arrogance thought they could crush us, finish off Thatcher’s work and finish us off for good. But in fact they did the opposite, because I believe that we found our fire last year and that we found our fight. Now we have to channel that fight like never before, to protect all that we hold dear: our public services, our welfare state and our industries.

To campaign for that vision of a better world where people matter more than profit, a world that works for the many not just for the few, that offers hope to everyone, particularly those who live in fear and poverty, and to challenge the Tories every step of the way.

Congress, don’t be fooled by this new leader. This is our new start line — the softer voice, the kitten heels — Theresa May is every inch a Tory, and we need to fight for our class like they do for theirs. *(Applause)*  And that’s why we need unity, why we need strength to grow and to fight back, to organise all those young workers who need a better deal at work every day.

This year we have seen what solidarity can achieve, with unions working together, setting aside differences, a real sense of a shared purpose, to tackle the tough challenge we all face: our NHS teetering on the brink, our industries under siege, Victorian employment practices re-emerging, the Sports Direct ethos, and so many more. Sexism and harassment in the workplace is rife again. But deeply worrying, Congress, is the vile and dangerous rise in racism unleashed by Brexit. The Far right now on the march, quite literally, across our continent. These are our challenges.

Never has our trade union mattered more. That we should invest and that our messages are more important than ever. Our schools, our hospitals and our housing are all vital, that all workers wherever they work should be treated equally, that they should be paid the rate for the job, regardless of their race, age or gender. We want no undercutting, no exploitation and no race to the bottom.

Congress, migrants aren’t the problems. The real enemies are the bosses who exploit them and the Tories who cut our public services. *(Applause)* That is our fight and that’s why we need to battle on.

And Congress, I can think of no better person to lead that fight than Frances. I’m incredibly proud to have worked alongside Frances this year, and we’ve had our own little bit of girl power. Frances leads by example, and I know where she leads many other women will follow. And to Paul and Kevin, and all the staff at the TUC, thank you for all your support, your professionalism but, more crucially, your friendship over the past year. You are a great team.

To my own brilliant union, UNISON, thank you for your never-ending support. You are like a family. UNISON is a special union. It’s got a million women for a start. From the jobs our members do, their dedication and their pride in the job, doing so much for so little, I’m incredibly proud to be part of UNISON. Thank you to you all. *(Applause)*

To my real family, the centre of my life, to my mum and dad, two of the kindest, most special people you could ever meet. I was never raised in a house where we sat round dinner tables discussing politics. My dad worked nights. Anyway, we always had tea, not dinner. But I was raised in a busy, welcoming home, where the door was always open and the kettle was always on. It was a home where some simple values were instilled in me, my brother and my sister, values lived out every day by my mum and day, and shaped, too, by their Catholic faith. First, that you worked hard and you gave your all. Secondly, that you reached out and looked out for other people. You helped each other, no matter how busy you were. Finally, that you shared. No matter how little you had, my mum always said “There’s always enough to share”. These are principles that drive and guide me today, and I thank my mum and dad for that. *(Applause)*

To my lovely daughters, Emma and Lauren — you, too, are the kindest, most generous, perhaps untidiest girls on earth, but you make me laugh every day and you remind me and your dad what life really is all about. Thank you for having belief in me. *(Applause)*

Last, but by no means least, Dave, who is sat right in front of me, my partner of 27 years. My mum says that people have been made saints for less. I met Dave 27 years ago at the NALGO staff Christmas party. It gets no classier than that. *(Applause)* For all those years, Dave has been a constant source of unquestioning support and gentle encouragement. Even in this year, when you’ve had your own election, you have always put me and the girls first, from early morning cups of tea to late-night lifts from the station, when we had missed the last train. Thank you, Dave, for your support this year and the last 27. *(Applause)*

Congress, back to business. This is our week for us to tell the world what we stand for, to celebrate our wins and to raise our heads high, to tell a positive story about the difference everyone of us makes to people’s lives, every hour of every day.

Congress, we are at a critical point in our history, our proud trade union history. If there’s one lesson we should never forget, it’s that our people and our class were never handed anything on a plate. Nothing was ever given graciously and nothing came without a fight. So that old saying — “unity is strength” — has never mattered more. We rise together or we fall together. It’s as simple as that.

So let’s stand together this week as trade unionists, as workers and as friends, treating each other with dignity and respect. That fighting spirit we’ve rekindled this year, let’s use it to fight the real enemy, the Tories! Congress, let’s organise, let’s campaign and let’s win. Thank you. *(A standing ovation)*

**Vote of Thanks to the President**

**Len McCluskey** (*Unite the Union)*): Congress, I am delighted to deliver this vote of thanks to my friend and fellow Liverpudlian, Liz Snape. Liz was politicised by our great city back in the 1980s and she has been a fighter for working people all of her life. The seed of her activism was sown in those turbulent years as Thatcherism ravaged working class communities throughout our nations, including Liverpool. They were heady days in my city with the Militant Tendency the dominant political force, and Liz played her part in the politics of the day, working with Derek Hatton and Tony Malone, and most importantly holding court in the Vernon Arms pub, which you will remember, Liz, was always a lock-in. She could drink, could our Liz, with the best of them. These days she has become like me, a southern softie, and so now she sips rosé wine with ice.

She studied Spanish and Russian at university and those linguistic skills have assisted her ever since in deciphering some of the gobbledegook that is often talked at political meetings. She then decided to go to the great metropolis, arriving at Euston Station not knowing where to go or what to do, should she turn right or should she turn left? Well, she has always been on the left so she turned left, walked into NALGO offices and in true Liverpool vernacular of the time, said, “Gi’s a job.” The rest is history.

It was there, of course, as you have heard that she met her beloved Dave, although she has been heard to say on many occasions she wished she had turned right on that fateful day at Euston Station!

In her union she has been a legal officer, equal opportunities officer, European policy officer and director of policy and political affairs. Four years ago she became Assistant General Secretary overseeing communications and political campaigning work in Unison, although I have to say, and I take pride in this, that Liz has been a lifelong member of my union, the Transport & General Workers Union, and now Unite. I think you know that is how Unison often knows what is going on in Unite sometimes before I even do.

She has been a champion for both women’s rights and health and safety, serving on the Women at Work Commission and the Health & Safety Executive, and you will struggle to find an equalities or women’s conference Liz has not played a role in. As recently as this month she was continuing that work launching the Labour Party’s policy platform for advancing women’s equality and leading the debate on the under-representation of women in our society on economic inequality, and tackling violence against women and girls.

Let me tell you, colleagues, that presiding over our General Council is no minor task. There are often competing agendas, sometimes disagreements, and I have even heard it suggested that there is a few big egos and strong heads that need knocking together, although I am not terribly sure who exactly that applies to.

I should tell you this, conference, that Liz is one of the few people in our Movement who frightened me. My Mum used to give me a look (and no words were ever needed) when she was angry with me that sent a shiver down my spine. I do not know whether it is a Liverpool thing but Liz has that same effect on me when she scowls at me. I can see Dave nodding; he knows what I am talking about. I have to tell you that she has been scowling at me quite a lot recently.

What I do know is that Liz has shown tremendous leadership over this last year. She has led from the front, rolled up her sleeves and dealt with the great challenges with her typically decent and indisputable skills and natural good humour. For that, Liz, we are all very grateful.

What a year it has been. As Liz said in that fantastic passionate address she has just given, politically, internationally, and industrially, she took over following election of the first Tory majority in over two decades and you led, Liz, and won key concessions during the passage of the most vindictive anti-trade union legislation in generations. You brought together unions on both sides of the argument when it came to the debate on Brexit, focusing our efforts as a movement on the outcome for working people, whatever the results. What a time that has been to be at the helm.

Of course, like anybody Liz is not perfect. She has skeletons. She is a huge Arsenal fan, for example. (*Cheers*) By the way, you were dead lucky yesterday, dead lucky! I do not know whether to blame Dave or her eldest daughter, Emma, for this because Liz may well have been left in the depths of despair supporting Everton otherwise. There goes my remaining friendship with John Hannett and I have no doubt that my own president, Tony Woodhouse, will have something to say.

As for skeletons, well, I could tell you about a night in a Japanese karaoke bar in Tokyo. Liz is getting very nervous now. I can feel one of those scowls burning into the back of my neck. I do not know, maybe not. Suffice to say she has not eaten sushi since.

Let me finish hoping, Liz, that you have a great Congress and that we see the twinkle in your eye and feel the warmth of that wonderful smile. Congress, it gives me the greatest pleasure in moving the vote of thanks for our Liz. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The Vice President**: I now call upon Clare Williams to second the vote of thanks to the President.

**Clare Williams** (*Unison*): Thanks very much. I have to say it is with huge pleasure and honour that I stand here today to second that vote of thanks to this year’s TUC President, Liz Snape. I do also think it is important to say how great has it been to have two women leading the trades union Movement this year and also on a personal note two women who are also Arsenal supporters like myself. Sorry about that, Len.

What a great start Liz had to her presidential year. It has already been referenced but that massive demonstration in Manchester with Liz at the helm showing her customary passion and determination to challenge this Tory Government’s pernicious policies of austerity, standing up for what we believe in, for trade unions and the labour Movement, but also critically understanding the power of collective action over that of the individual. Liz has continued that strong leadership throughout her year and I have no doubt will continue that throughout this week.

Liz has always been inspirational leader within Unison and I believe the wider trade union and labour Movement, being a passionate campaigner and giving people the confidence to get active in trade union and political activity. I have to say that I know about that first hand and on a personal basis. I met Liz as a young elected lay trade union activist. I would like to say that it was not that many years ago but, sadly, it is more than I can admit to. Throughout all of those years, Liz provided me with mentoring, support and guidance, and also now in my new role as a regional secretary.

Liz has not only been a mentor to myself but to many others in Unison and beyond. So, today I speak on behalf of those people and I also speak on behalf of those people to whom I know Liz has shown genuine compassion and kindness, people like Kenny Bell, who was the elected deputy regional convenor from Unison in the Northern Region, who very tragically was diagnosed with terminal cancer. What I will tell you about Liz is a little known fact. Liz actually without fuss, without making a great public show, quietly and without hesitation contacted Kenny and supported him, and others in our region, through that difficult time. She supported him to remain politically active because she understands the importance of that to us as trade unionists.

She also understands that as activists we are also human beings who sometimes have to face very difficult personal challenges. That is one of the reasons why I, along with many others, value Liz both as a friend and a comrade, both personally and politically. Mind you, that said, and Len has already alluded to this, if you disagree with Liz she is not afraid to speak out her mind and to keep you in line. She has done that to me on a couple of occasions, and others. What I will say is that Liz does that with genuine belief in what she is saying but I guess it has also been useful, Liz, for you this year because I do think it must be very hard keeping a lot of general secretaries in line. At least throughout the rest of this week you have a red button which you can use to chop people off if they go on too long. I will say I have heard an unconfirmed rumour, and it is unconfirmed, that Liz has said she is taking the red button home with her so she can switch Dave off if he goes on too long! (*Laughter*)

I would also say Liz is a strong advocate for international solidarity and I know within Unison she has particularly supported women capacity building projects and most projects have made a significant and substantial different to women’s lives in places such as Colombia and Sierra Leone, and many others. Liz also combines her passion for football with her strong commitment to promoting equality in everything she does, and also fighting racism and fascism. Liz has been a longstanding ardent supporter of *Show Racism the Red Card*. I know that that organisation is extremely grateful, Liz, for your support to them.

Liz is a dedicated trade unionist and political activist who I know spends every day determined to make a difference, fighting for our principles of social justice, speaking up for and with Unison members and activists up and down this country tirelessly, and for all of those beyond Unison who are being unfairly targeted by this Government’s policies of austerity and attacking some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Liz is always leading from the front making sure the Tories are challenged, making sure those employers who want to rip off workers are challenged, and every day she is unwavering in her commitment for achieving a different world. I know that Liz, like all of us in this hall, not only believe but know that together through collectivity a different world is possible.

Liz, I want to say very heartfelt personal thanks from me for all that you have done for me over the years. I want to say a very big thanks from the Unison delegation because I know that they rate you as one of the strongest leaders we have had, and I want to say a thanks from this Congress because I know they appreciate everything you have done this year and will do this week, and beyond your term of office. Liz, that is three thanks from me because you absolutely deserve it. Good luck this week.

**The Vice President**: Thank you, Len, and thank you, Clare. Back to the President.

**The President**: Thank you. Congress, you will see I have been joined on the stage by Luca, General Secretary of the ETUC. Luca will be speaking a little later. Delegates, we return to Section 1 of the General Council Report, Jobs, growth and a new economy, and the section on Europe from page 2 onwards. I call paragraph 1.1 and Composite Motion 1, European Union. The General Council support the Composite Motion. It is to be moved by Unite, seconded by Unison, and supporters are FBU, Community, CWU, the RMT, UCATT, and UCU. I call Unite. Thank you. Thanks, Len.

**GC Report Section 1: Jobs, growth and a new economy**

**European Union**

**Len McCluskey** (*Unite the Union*) moved Composite Motion 1.

He said: Twice in a couple of minutes, although this is my last this week, colleagues. Sisters and brothers, this is not a debate that most of us wanted. This Congress and most affiliates, not all by any means, went into the European referendum campaign determined that remaining in the EU was the right choice for working people. We took that case up and down the country and fought for the voice of working people to be heard in a campaign that was dominated on both sides by the Tories but we did not prevail and now this Movement has to pick up the pieces, fight to protect workers’ rights and to defend jobs against the background of an unsympathetic government and growing economic uncertainty.

We also need to recognise why we lost, above all why so many industrial communities, as this composite recognises, voted to leave. It should not be a mystery. Far too much of Britain has been left behind by globalisation, whole industries have disappeared leaving communities derelict and generations without hope. Add to that austerity and cuts in services with relentless downward pressure on wages and an elite that has passed the burdens of the crisis on to the less fortunate. It is not surprising that millions of people, including significant numbers of our own members, voted to give the establishment a kicking.

One thing has become very clear, no one knows exactly what Brexit means. Business and the City are already pushing for their version of Brexit, one that protects their profits and our first task is to ensure that the workers’ voice is heard loud and clear. I want to congratulate Frances for her tenacity in demanding from the Prime Minister our place in any negotiations. Our basic demands are set out in this composite, no reduction in workers’ rights, no loss of jobs, and an immediate end to the shameful racist backlash which has taken hold since the referendum.

Unite has proved at Sports Direct that it is the greedy bosses who are to blame for driving down wages, not migrant workers. (*Applause*) Nor, colleagues, must Brexit be used as an excuse by big business to cut jobs and investments in Britain; a shadow hangs over too many workplaces today, productive factories like Fords at Bridgend who now have their future thrown into doubt.

We are ready to work with employers to overcome any genuine problems that may exist but we are not prepared to see Brexit used as a smokescreen for further disinvestment from Britain. I put Ford Motor Company on notice: out of the EU must not mean out of work.

I welcome that the Prime Minister has introduced the concept of industrial strategy back into the name of the business department but we need more than just words. I visited Port Talbot last week to see a magnificent workforce and a facility that has been betrayed by consecutive governments through lack of investment. We need state action to help save our steel industry as a priority. We need to hear the Government say without waffle or equivocation that they are not planning to use Brexit to strip British workers, already the least protected in Europe, of any of the employment and social rights that have been secured from the European Union. (*Applause*) If Theresa May’s one nation social justice rhetoric means anything, it must mean at least that.

Congress, we need to turn the challenge of Brexit into an opportunity, an opportunity to reconnect with our members in abandoned communities, an opportunity to break with neo-liberal economics and start the debate as to what sort of country we want Britain to be. It was a predecessor of mine, Nye Bevan, who said, “When the time comes for a great struggle between capital and labour, I want it to have a very definite objective, that of achieving for those who toil the mastery of their own lives.” Brexit is now that struggle. We want a Britain beyond austerity and fear. We want a Britain shaped by the optimism and generosity of working people. I move. (*Applause*)

**The President**: I now call Unison.

**Dave Prentis** (*Unison*) seconded Composite Motion 1.

He said: Congress, we meet at a defining moment. We meet in the aftermath of a referendum in which many people voted in good faith to leave the EU but many voted on false promises from politicians who should have known better. We meet in the aftermath of a referendum that unleashed some of the worst of our society, arising in an ugly time of racism, a frightening shadow of anti-foreigner, anti-immigrant sentiments, once consigned to the sewer of the far Right, now unleashed into the mainstream setting worker against worker, dividing communities.

Our Trade Union Congress has a proud tradition of tackling racism and we have a duty – a duty – to send out a clear message from this Congress that we will take on the racists. We will not tolerate racism in our society. (*Applause*) We meet in the aftermath of a referendum that has left the Tory Government with no plan, Tory politicians parroting Brexit as a substitute for an economic plan for the country, plans for our jobs and plans for our children’s future; worst of all, a new Tory Prime Minister sticking to the same failed austerity agenda that has prolonged the recession and hurt so many of our people: 600,000 public service jobs gone and more to follow, harsh spending cuts, pushing nurses, social workers, those caring for our elderly, and our children beyond breaking point. British people did not vote for more cuts on June 23rd, they did not endorse austerity, they voted for more spending. Remember the Big Boris Bus promising £350m a week for the NHS. Don’t hold your breath. Within hours lead politicians were falling over themselves, backtracking on their false NHS promises.

There is a better way. Rather than the same old failed policies of the past, the Government could use Brexit as an opportunity to drop the shackles of spending cuts, invest in jobs, in services, in infrastructure, they could renew our country, rebalance the economy, and give the next generation the opportunities they deserve, trade agreements that protect working people, the environment, equal rights, it could be an opportunity to turn the table on the privateers, the free marketers, and all those who would turn Britain into an even lower tax, lower investment, free trade, tax haven for the super rich.

They could seize the opportunity for a better, fairer, much more equal Britain but we know that that will not happen under this Tory Government. That is why we need more than ever a united Labour Party, an electable Labour Party that can effect real change. That is what our members want, that is what our members need, and it is why trade unions founded the Labour Party in the first place.

Unison has a message for this Government: we will take you on for your austerity agenda, and we fully support the junior doctors’ strike action born out of austerity – (*Applause*) – and if Hunt comes for our NHS members unsocial hours payments we will do the same as the junior doctors, and Labour councils attacking the livelihood of low paid women, Labour councils who should know better, like Durham and Derby, if they continue to try and cut the wages of our teaching support staff by 25% we will move to industrial action. (*Applause*)

Finally, to our Labour Party, given everything we need to do, get back to the job of providing a proper opposition and showing that we are an alternative government. We need you. Don’t let our members down. I second. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I now call the FBU. Thanks, Matt.

**Matt Wrack** (*Fire Brigades Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 1.

He said: Undoubtedly, brothers and sisters, we are in a new period of turmoil in the aftermath of the EU referendum as negotiations and confusion around what those negotiations mean unfolds, tension in many areas of policy, including huge tensions within the Tory Party, and within that context we need a unique labour movement, working class orientation to the problems that we face in this new period.

The starting point for us on this is that we are not in this together; therefore, there is no partnership for us with the Tories, no partnership with the bosses. For us the EU referendum, bearing in mind the balance of using this Congress, was a setback for our Movement, a setback for the labour Movement and a setback for internationalism. It has, unfortunately, given confidence to the racists. It has given confidence to xenophobes. It has given confidence to those who want to blame migrants for the causes of our problems. I think we should take this opportunity to send our solidarity, support, and sympathy, to all migrants and foreign born workers in the aftermath of the horrific murder in Harlow recently. (*Applause*)

It has been said that it is worth bearing in mind again low wages are not caused by migrants; they are caused by rip-off bosses. The housing crisis in Britain is not caused by migrants; it is caused by market failure and years of failing to build council houses. The attacks on our public services are not caused by foreign-born workers, they are caused by those making political decisions in Westminster; austerity is the fault of the Tories, not of migrants and, by the way, not necessarily of Brussels. Our main enemy in this lies in our political opponents in Westminster.

Where does the blame for this mess we are in lie? Well, we do not blame our own members, many of whom may well have voted for a referendum. Let’s remember that actually the majority of Leave voters are in the southern parts of England. The biggest single group of Leave voters were Tory voters and two-thirds of Labour voters voted to remain. I, and our union, do not remotely accept the criticisms of Jeremy Corbyn as though he somehow caused the Leave vote. I have never heard anything so ridiculous in my life. (*Applause*) The truth is that Corbyn’s scepticism about leaving the EU reflected the policies of my own union and reflected the policies of many unions in this Movement. The blame lies with the Tories for the lies that were presented to voters in the run-up to the referendum.

Our starting point has to be no concessions, no race to the bottom, no surrender of rights and no surrender to Lawson when he says this is an opportunity to complete the Thatcher revolution. Yes, indeed, there are working class communities who are alienated by years of de-industrialisation, under-investment, poverty, unemployment, and poor housing. Our task, brothers and sisters, is to set out a vision, a vision where we put ourselves, the labour Movement, at the head of the campaign to defend rights, to defend jobs, to defend public services, in this new and difficult period. There are undoubtedly huge divisions in the Tory Party and the next two years will see those divisions grow and grow. We see them already in Cabinet and outside Cabinet; they will grow and we can exploit them if we are prepared to fight. Let us fight, brothers and sisters. (*Applause*)

**The President**: I call Community.

**Paul Mills** (*Community*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 1.

He said: Since June 24th our country has been turned upside down, a new Prime Minister, the Labour party in turmoil, businesses and workers worried about their future and for our immigrant communities a worrying rise in racist and xenophobic hate crime. Congress, that was no natural disaster. That was no act of God. The British people voted for Brexit, including millions of trade unionists.

We should be proud of the TUC and most affiliates who backed Remain but we desperately need to understand why so many working class communities chose to ignore trade union leaders and voted to leave Europe. For too long we have ignored real concerns about the way that immigration has changed our local communities. We failed to tackle the argument that said low wages and zero-hour contracts are the fault of foreign workers and not the product of a failed economic system.

Congress, the vote is behind us. 17.4 million people voted to leave and we have a responsibility to make the best of that reality. Rather than lamenting the failed campaign, we need to get back out there and defend our jobs, our rights, and our multicultural society. We must protect our members against attacks on health and safety provisions, maternity and paternity rights, paid holiday, and all other rights protected by the EU. Congress, it is not just our rights at work under threat, it is our jobs themselves that could disappear. Across the country thousands of workers in different industries rely on the UK being open to business with the rest of Europe. We need to be able to sell our goods and services freely across the Continent and that means retaining access to the Single Market.

Congress, we need to understand what we lost and why so many of our members thought we had it wrong, and we need to get out there and ensure that Brexit does not become another Tory excuse to take away our rights and turn Britain into a nation that turns our back entirely on our closest neighbours and allies. Now more than ever we need the TUC to offer leadership and a pragmatic vision for making Brexit work in the best interests of our members. Congress, please support the composite. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call CWU.

**Kate Hudson** (*Communication Workers Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 1.

She said: Congress, in the last few months our country has made one of its most challenging decisions of our time to leave the European Union. Whilst we do not all agree on the outcome of the vote, we must stand by the decision made and show unity and strength in the face of an uncertain future. When workers’ rights and benefits could be threatened, we must stand together and ensure working people do not pay the price of Brexit. Never have trade unions been more needed in this country than now as the vote to leave has also brought with it huge uncertainties about the future of our economy, jobs, and public services. We must stand up for the generations to follow whose future is as indecisive as ever and we have to do all we can to protect those in retirement whose livelihoods are now under threat.

Pensioners must not pay the cost of Brexit. We must protect state pensions and workplace pensions. Congress, defined benefit schemes are already under enormous pressure with £100bn rise in scheme deficits in August alone because of the lump sum in long-term government bonds following the referendum vote employers have been cautioned by the pensions regulator not to overreact to short-term market uncertainty, but it seems they are not listening. Many, including Royal Mail, are using these hypothetical deficit calculations as an excuse to claim their defined benefit pension schemes are unaffordable. Market volatility will also affect people saving for retirement in defined contribution schemes where they will all be investment risks themselves.

The triple lock on the state pension means the payments always increase by whatever is the highest, inflation, average earnings, or 2.5%. This guarantee could easily be swept away by this Tory Government hell bent on continuing its vicious programme of cuts to public funding. The Prime Minister warned before the EU referendum that the triple lock could be cut if we voted to leave and former Tory pensions minister, Baroness Altmann, said cutting the triple lock would save billions, whilst Labour has rightly said that going back on the Tories’ manifesto commitment to the triple lock would be a grand betrayal of voters.

Congress, we must campaign hard to defend workers and pensioners from Tory attacks following the vote to leave the European Union and that includes fighting to protect occupational pension schemes and state pension benefits so that workers can genuinely afford to live in dignity in retirement. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: I have three additional unions, RMT, UCATT and UCU. I call RMT, please.

**John Reid** (*National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers*) spoke in opposition to Composite Motion 1.

He said: I think we must not fall into the trap of blaming Brexit. If you read through the resolution that will fall into a trap of any attacks coming up that people got it wrong when they voted for Brexit. Our union campaigned for an exit vote from Europe as an anti-austerity, anti-privatisation, anti-big business; we also put forward anti-racist policies as well. We argued for exit on an internationalist and a socialist programme, and against the bosses’ attack of the EU.

The RMT has been against the European Union since the 1970s and we welcome the Brexit vote because this is a break from the bosses’ club which has since that time attacked the conditions of working class people. We also opposed it because of the protection against rail privatisation, encouraging TTIP, etc., and also the barriers to nationalisation.

The neo-liberal attacks on British workers, Italian workers and on Greek workers, as well as the ravaging of the Greek economy that we have seen, is the experience of Europe for the majority of people in Europe. Workers’ wages have fallen by 10% in the last eight years in Britain. Let’s be clear on this, we have not achieved workers’ rights by the diktat of Europe. Workers’ rights in Britain and Europe have been won by mass struggle of workers throughout Britain and throughout Europe. Equal pay was not given by Europe. It was won by women workers at Fords in the 1970s taking strike action.

We in the RMT will stand up to defend workers’ rights and fight against austerity. As for racism, this has been stirred up by our enemies in the Brexit campaign but, really, the absence of the trades union Movement and the left not taking a position to exit Europe on a socialist programme also had a hand in it. We stand by the rights of all European workers to remain in Britain; they keep transport, health, and public services running. The European Union is in crisis. We are against the pro-capitalist European Union. We stand for international solidarity and socialism. The RMT opposes this resolution. We stand by a socialist and class programme and against the programme of the European Union. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. UCATT.

**Jonathan Davies** (*Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 1.

He said: Like the majority of trade unionists gathered here this week, UCATT asked its members to vote to stay in the EU, and failed. The disconnect our organisation (and no doubt others here today) has with its members should rightly spread disquiet amongst those of us who consider ourselves socialists and working class. The British people voted in millions to leave the EU, a decision against their own interests. We all know that communities were left feeling behind the prosperity of the age we live in and we also equally know those communities were not failed by the EU, they were failed by British governments, both Tory and Labour. There are also many who will rally against the failures of so-called neo-liberalism and say that Brexit is a good thing, that will allow us to focus on those blighted communities, but they would be as wrong as the people who voted to leave.

The age of the nation state is plainly coming to a close. This is the beginning of the end of arbitrary lines drawn on a map by public schoolboys over the last two centuries. We can now travel the world and communicate with complete freedom. This is not going to change. Communities have found they have more in common with people in other countries rather than their own. Londoners feel they have more in common with Barcelona and New York than they do with the folk of Middlesbrough. The left-behind communities of the UK share the same fears as those in France who support Marine Le Penn. As UCATT we say, yes, we have to help the communities left behind in the UK but, equally, this does not mean shutting ourselves off from the EU that shares the same objectives as ourselves.

The EU was a force for good for construction workers in the UK guaranteeing a plethora of rights from paid holidays to the control of asbestos, amongst other things. Brexit symbolised lies, fears and resentments. This Movement needs to counter with truth, hope and prosperity for all, hopefully with our brothers and sisters in Europe. We are all European; that will definitely never change. I support this composite.

**The President**: I call UCU.

**Joanna de Groot** (*University and College Union*) spoke in support of the Composite.

She said: I think it is terrific that the labour Movement is getting its act together to move forward to defend those things that we most value for our people and I want to speak specifically in support of the CWU amendment. We have heard that what we need now to be doing is defending jobs, rights, and public services, and we also need to be defending pensions.

This movement has always been proud to be active on behalf of decent pensions. UCU heartily backs the amendment defending the triple lock, committing governments to increase their pensions by whatever is highest, a rise in inflation, a rise in average earnings, or 2.5%. What we are now hearing is Tories floating the possibility, because it is unaffordable, that this triple lock may be broken. I think we can have little confidence that they will not be using the Brexit uncertainty, a phrase that I hear all too often from my employers, to re-question this protection.

Let’s be clear, colleagues, this is an attack on working people, who have already contributed in many ways to their society, our society, and our economy, and it is unacceptable. Our view is that the triple lock is the bare minimum basis for decent pensions; indeed, our view is the pensions should be linked to the cost of living. Let us not see pensioners on the receiving end of an outrageous attack with Brexit as an excuse. I urge you to support the amendment as well as the composite. Thank you. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. No right of reply, Unite? Right, we will move to the vote, colleagues. Will all those in favour of Composite Motion 1 please show? Thank you. All those against? Thank you. That is clearly carried.

\* *Composite Motion 1 was CARRIED.*

**The President**: I mentioned before that we may be able to take Emergency Motion 1 at some point. I think we probably can so could I ask Prospect and Usdaw to be ready. Thank you. I now move to Composite Motion 2, Making a success of Brexit. The General Council support the composite motion to be moved by FDA, seconded by GMB, with PCS supporting. Thank you. Thanks, Dave.

**Making a success of Brexit**

**Dave Penman** (*FDA*) moved Composite Motion 2.

He said: Congress, when I woke on the morning of 24th June Britain felt like a different country, a nation’s future inextricably linked to the EU for over 40 years now faces uncertain times. It seemed improbable that despite the collective wealth of every major political party, most trade unions, academics and the majority of business, the voters in the UK had indeed had enough of experts.

Like most in this room, I passionately wanted to remain but whether we like it or not, whether we think we were lied to and cheated, whether we wished there was a way to deliver a second referendum, the reality is that our Government will soon trigger Article 50 and begin the complicated process of leaving the EU. Whether we believe it is in our collective interests or not, we need to ensure that this process delivers the best possible outcome for the citizens of the UK. Congress, leaving the EU is not an event, it is a slow torturous process that will take not months but years and possibly decades to complete. What with the trade deals, tariffs, fisheries and agricultural policy, mountains of legislation, employment rights, safety standards, the list is endless. The biggest legal legislative and administrative challenge in peacetime history is how Paul Jenkin, the government’s former chief legal adviser, described it.

This is the challenge facing the Civil Service. The Civil Service, not the three Brexiteers of Johnson, Davis and Fox, will be expected to rise to this challenge. Whilst they squabble for sound bites and undermine British business in the process, it is the Civil Service that has to get on with delivering a successful outcome. In the days following the vote, teams were assembled in departments to begin the mammoth task of assessing legislative policy and capability issues that need to be addressed. No government department is untouched.

While the new department for exiting the European Union has been created to coordinate this work, reality is the greatest burden will fall on departments like Defra, the Foreign Office, International Trade, and the Government Legal Department, “The most complex and important task the British Civil Service has undertaken in decades,” said David Cameron as he exited stage right, yet for all the platitudes and how the brightest and best are flocking to the new Exit Department and the Civil Service is up to the challenge, there has been a deafening silence from government on whether a single penny or extra resource will be delivered to support it, not a solitary word has been spoken publicly by a minister on whether the Civil Service will be given additional resources to cope with managing the exit process.

It may be the biggest task facing the Civil Service since the Second World War but it is being asked of a service that is at its smallest since that war. Successive governments have decimated the Civil Service, which lost 20% of its resources in the last government and is due to face similar cuts again by 2020. Resources are already being allocated to this task and the demand will grow exponentially as the exit process begins and each department assesses the implications of move and counter-move in the negotiating process.

As World War II metaphors abound it seems the Government’s approach to the Civil Service is simply make do and mend. Let me make it clear, Congress, this is not about producer interest, this is not the inevitable claim of a trade union for more staff and more members. This is about protecting jobs, employment rights, and our environment. Failure to provide additional resources will not only undermine the exit process itself, it will also result in further cuts to already depleted public services as departments reallocate people and money to these new ministerial priorities. Something will have to give and departments will have no choice but to cut public services for them.

Congress, we should be enormously proud of our professional, dedicated and politically neutral Civil Service but that Civil Service needs clear political leadership and, crucially, increased capacity and capability if it is to serve best the interests of our nation over the next few critical years. Congress, I move. (*Applause*)

**The President**: Thank you. I call GMB.

**Joe Morgan** (*GMB*) seconded Composite Motion 2.

He said: If I may, President, take a moment of Congress’s time to mention our National President, Mary Turner. Mary has been very ill of late and she obviously cannot be here but she has asked to send her best wishes to Congress and I am sure we all wish her a speedy recovery and we look forward to seeing her back as soon as possible. (*Applause*)

Congress, like many unions in the hall today, as has already been said, the GMB campaigned in the referendum to remain part of the European Union not because we thought the European Union was perfect, we know it is not, but because we felt it was the best option to protect jobs, employment rights, and economic stability of our members and this country. Our position in the GMB was an angry Remain. For too long the European Union had put profit before people, business interests before trade unions as we battle to maintain basic employment rights and protections we fought for over many years with any new rights becoming a distant dream.

We warned, colleagues, that this changed public support for the European Union would dissolve and the referendum vote confirmed just how far that support has diminished. We are now in unchartered waters. The Prime Minister has announced that the formal process for withdrawal from the European Union will not be launched until at least early 2017. Clearly, there was no government plan B for the referendum and the Leave campaign did just that, they left. They broke all the windows, made a run for it and scarpered. The electorate was wooed by an army of Grand Old Dukes of York giving many promises that were just not true.

The GMB also, with other colleagues in the hall, condemns the growth of intolerance and hate crime in recent months and we call on the Government to take firm action to counter this. They must also guarantee continued rights of residency in the UK for citizens from other European Union countries currently working in both public and the private sector, ensuring that they are paid the collective agreed rate for the job as well. The same rights of residency must also be extended to the thousands of UK citizens, amongst them many of our members, currently working in other European Union Member States who are feeling equally insecure since the referendum.

Public services have faced vicious cuts and staff reductions under this Government which need to be reversed to deal with the challenges that we face. This includes developing expertise in trade policy, which we hope will be more receptive to our concerns, and dumping TTIP and CETA blueprints will be a good start for ten.

In the current political and constitutional turmoil one thing is certain, it has never been more important to belong to a trade union. Our members trust us to keep our heads and get on with what has always been our main priority, looking after the jobs, the rights, the conditions, and wellbeing of our members. Governments at all levels need to involve trade unions in addressing the impact and the process of the European Union exit, and our future relationship with the European Union. Congress, please support this composite. I second. (*Applause*)

**The President**: I call PCS.

**Chris Baugh** (*Public and Commercial Services Union*) spoke in support of Composite Motion 2.

He said: If the result of the referendum came as something of a surprise, if not a shock, not least to Cameron and the City, it is quite clear from all of the discussion and the contributions from earlier speakers that this has thrown up so many issues that need to be resolved if the trades union Movement, we would argue, steps up to the task in front of us, that is, to ensure that this does not become a pretext with all the economical uncertainty that has been generated for the Tories attempting to make trade union members and the British working class yet again pay the price of a crisis that they did not cause.

Cameron may have gone but, as earlier speakers have indicated, there is no indication there is any respite whatsoever as far as the Government are concerned. I watched the Prime Minister in Question Time, asked, “Where do you stand on the Single Market?” “Where do you stand on the free movement of labour?” and the basic position was, “We’re not going to tell you.” You look at the ministers that she has appointed ostensibly to lead the negotiations, you listen to the diplomatic lectures that the Government were given at the G20 talks, not much of that in the media it should be said. It leads you to the conclusion that this Government does not know what they are doing. That is why it is so important, as I think all speakers have indicated, now is the time for the trades union Movement to step up and put its case.

My union welcomes this motion. Other debates deal with the question of workers’ rights, environmental protection, the importance of organising against the racists and the racism that the outcome of the referendum has generated, but we have seen in the Civil Service 20% cuts in a six-year period, and one of the key departments, the former Business, Innovation & Skills, now takes in Energy. It is on the receiving end of a redundancy programme and despite talk of a Northern Power House, PCS members are challenging the ridiculous decision to shut the Sheffield office with the loss of jobs and all of the expertise that goes with it, so we very much welcome in this motion the call for a halt, echoed, it should be said, by a former head of the Civil Service, Lord Kerslake. They recognise you cannot reconcile the level of cuts that are coming our way without seriously addressing the vast piece of work that Brexit entails.

We welcome the call for a halt to the job cuts, the office closures, the privatisations, and it should be noted the changes to terms and conditions that our members are confronted with, which I think illustrates the real intention of this Government. They have just indicated that talks over potential changes to the Civil Service Compensation Scheme have now effectively been abruptly ended and now intend from as soon as 10th October, so we understand, to impose terms and changes that involve a 25% to 30% cut in the voluntary exit or voluntary redundancy packages of our members. If that does not tell us the intentions of this Government nothing else will.

So, we call for a halt to the job cuts, we want proper consultation with all of the unions, a proper assessment of the staffing, the resources, the vast pieces of work that negotiations entail with Brexit, and, as others have said, the vital role of trade unions to defend the position of EU nationals who have made such an important contribution in the NHS and many other parts of the public service. In conclusion, Brexit, whatever it means, it is going to be for trade unions as part of a wider social movement to make sure that Brexit is not used as an excuse for more of the same. Congress, please support. (*Applause*)

**The President:** There is no right of reply so we will move straight to the vote on Composite Motion 2. Will all those in favour, please show? Will all those against, please show?

 \* *Composite Motion 2 was CARRIED*

**The President:** Congress, it is now my great pleasure to introduce the General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation, Luca Vesentini. Luca is a true friend of the British trade union Movement. When David Cameron was jetting around Europe as part of his negotiations pre-referendum, Luca played a key role in getting us access to the highest levels of the European Union, ensuring that our workers’ rights were not up for grabs. The week after the referendum, Luca brought the ETUC to London in a very clear and welcome gesture of solidarity and support for us as a trade union Movement.

Luca has one of the least enviable jobs in the trade union Movement. His executive contains not one, but over 60 leaders of national trade union movements. There must be a collective noun for that! Luca, you are very welcome to our Congress and I invite you to address us. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**Address by Luca Visentini, General Secretary of the ETUC**

**Luca Visentini** *(General Secretary of the ETUC)****:*** Thank you very much, Liz, for this very warm welcome and thank you very much, all of you, for inviting me to address your Congress. Thank you very much, in particular, Frances. I think that this shows the great cooperation and solidarity that we have built up together, especially during these hard times for Europe and for the UK.

Dear comrades of the TUC, dear friends, it is really an honour for me to be here today with you and to speak to your Congress. I understand that it is not an ordinary Congress. We have just faced the greatest shock to hit the United Kingdom and the European Union in recent times, namely, Brexit, that you discussed just now.

We, as the European trade unions, fully respect the result of this referendum, but let me be sincere: we are not at all happy with it. We do not want, and we do not need, British citizens and workers to leave the European Union. Outside the EU, British workers risk having less protection and without British workers, all the other European workers will face the same risk. Trade union history teaches us a clear lesson: united and in international solidarity, workers and trade unions are stronger; divided they are weaker.

So I want to be clear with you: even if Great Britain has decided to leave the EU, the TUC will always be a member of the European Trade Union Confederation. *(Applause)* We will never give up on our unity and on our common struggles. I heard a great slogan from a comrade from the construction sector who took the floor just now: “We are all European and this has never changed.” I think this can also become the slogan for the European Trade Union Confederation for the future, together with you.

We still do not know what is going to happen – when exactly the British Government will trigger Article 50, where the negotiations will lead us, and if this is the definitive destiny of the UK or if there is a way back. There are two things that we are sure about: we will fight to make certain that workers’ interests (both in the UK and in Europe) are not damaged by Brexit and we will ensure that trade unions are involved in the negotiations. We have been assured by the President of the European Commission (Mr. Juncker) that the ETUC will be properly consulted and we expect the British Government to do the same with the TUC. We will struggle for that.

European unity brought important benefits for workers (peace, prosperity and social inclusion) and the tools to achieve them: the single market and the fundamental freedoms (particularly free movement of workers), the European social model. It is very likely that political and business elites will try to keep all the advantages that come from the EU for themselves while doing all they can to weaken social protection and workers’ rights. There is a clear attempt to misuse Brexit to undermine social Europe from the UK Government, but also from other governments in the European Union. This is an additional reason to be united, for the TUC and the ETUC to agree a common position and common proposals and to coordinate our participation in these negotiations. We warmly welcome the TUC’s campaign to maintain the rights of continental European workers here in the UK and to be sure, similarly, that the ETUC will call on EU governments to give British citizens and workers abroad the right to remain where they are.

Brexit is not the only emergency we have in front of us: the European Union itself is in danger. The economic crisis, high unemployment, social exclusion, the refugee crisis, terrorism, rising xenophobia, populism and racism all challenge citizens’ trust in the future. Europe is blamed for all the problems now facing people although most of the responsibility lies with decisions taken by governments. Distrust is also widespread among workers and that sometimes even affects trade unions. That is why we, in the ETUC, have decided to launch a broad discussion on the future of Europe and the TUC is fully involved in this discussion. Our continent is at a crossroads: either it is reshaped and reformed into a different, fairer Europe or it is at risk of collapsing. Change is urgently needed and the European trade union movement wants to contribute to it. Together, we need to build a new vision for Europe.

There are three main areas where together we can build a Europe for working people. The first one is the economy. Our economies are still facing recession, deflation and high levels of unemployment. Austerity, cuts and structural reforms have shown themselves to be the wrong way out of the crisis. Current economic dogmas have led to a collapse in investment, demand and wages with rising inequalities and social divergence between countries, sectors and categories of workers. It is high time to change our economic model. We need to restore a progressive economy and an economy for people’s prosperity, not only for business.

The first essential is public investment in order to do that: investment for infrastructure, innovation and research, education and training, sound and efficient public services and sustainable development. All economies that are performing better have triggered their recovery through public investment and all international financial institutions are finally recognising this. The European Commission President’s Investment Plan almost failed because it was mainly based on private resources instead of public ones. Even international trade agreements like TTIP, CETA and TISA, which were based purely and simply on the interests of capital and business, are falling one after the other. We will continue, with your full support, to campaign against these so-called trade deals. *(Applause)*

We have, together, to counter this narrative to destroy the fake myth that public investment and well-functioning public services and social protection systems increase debt and wreck the economy. The exact opposite is true. We are building up alliances, within and outside Europe, particularly with north American trade unions, to get a radical new deal for our economies.

The second pillar of our strategy is wages. In recent years, wages have been depressed almost everywhere, both in the public and private sectors. Minimum wage and collective bargaining systems have been dismantled and pay inequalities and gaps have risen. Minimum wage and collective bargaining systems have been dismantled and pay inequalities and gaps have risen.

Another myth lay behind this, that the European economy can compete on labour costs only and that reducing wages can increase productivity and competitiveness of companies and even efficiency in public services. Actually, productivity and efficiency went down together with workers’ purchasing power and wages and we know the reason. The European economy is not led by exports. It is based on internal demand. 70% of our products remain in Europe and if we do not boost workers’ purchasing power, there is no hope for our economy.

The EUTC is therefore ready to launch a major campaign for a general pay rise for European workers, a campaign which will be based on higher living wages and on strengthening and restoring collective bargaining. It is a campaign based on upward wage convergence in multinational companies across western and eastern Europe so that we put an end to social dumping and exploitation of migrant workers and, at the same time, reduce inequalities for all working people.

We know that increasing wages is the biggest challenge for trade unions and we know the difficulties you face in the UK on this, especially when it is about reinforcing collective bargaining, but we are all convinced that this is our core business. Collective bargaining and negotiations on wages is the core business of the trade unions if we want to strengthen our role and increase our membership. The ETUC is on your side in your fight for better living wages in the UK and we are sure that you will be actively part of our European campaign.

Finally, the third pillar of our action is a more social Europe. This means a future for youth, equality for the most disadvantaged, and better pensions for all. It means efficient unemployment protection. It means minimum incomes to fight poverty and social exclusion, high-quality public services (starting with healthcare), health and safety and education and training rights. It means mobility of work which ensures equal treatment and portability of social protection. It means new rights for young, precarious and non-standard workers in the most innovative as well as in traditional sectors of the economy.

Social Europe means upward convergence towards better social standards with no derogations and opt-outs from fundamental social and trade union rights. Social Europe means also social dialogue and social rights having the same importance as economic freedoms. This is the European Social Model we have built up together over decades, a model that has been an example to the rest of the world, but which is now under attack and misrepresented as an obstacle to economic progress. Actually, societies with a strong social model, efficient social dialogue and industrial relations, and inclusive social cohesion (like in Scandinavia, for example) also do better economically.

So, let us fight for social Europe. This is the moment to do it. This is the only way out of the crisis and to give people hope. The European Commission has launched a initiative to develop a European Pillar of Social Rights. We expect President Jean-Claude Juncker to be committed to achieving it, but he needs our help since some governments, political forces and European bureaucrats, together with business, are trying to undermine him. We want this Social Pillar to be applied to the whole of Europe and not only to the Eurozone and we want the UK to be part of it, regardless of Brexit, so that you can continue to benefit from the European social model.

We have at least two-and-a-half years of negotiations in front of us. We have to exploit them to get better social protection and rights for British and European workers together. Dear comrades, it will not be an easy battle, we know that, but it is our duty. We have the best proposals and tools to win it. We can make it if we stand united and we fight together for our values and our goals.

We, the European Trade Union Confederation, together with the TUC, have the future in our hands. Let us make it real! Thank you very much. Have a great Congress! *(Applause)*

**The President:** Thank you for that, Luca. I am pleased that the rest of the European Trade Union Movement knows that we are absolutely committed to active membership of the EUTC and to working together to secure the best possible deal for all workers across Europe. *(Applause)* Please also take our sympathy and solidarity back to your fellow Italian trade unionists still dealing with the aftermath of last month’s devastating earthquake. Thank you very much, Luca. *(Applause)*

Thank you, colleagues. I am now going to move on to Emergency Motion 1, Zero tolerance for sexual harassment. The General Council supports the emergency motion. Can I call Prospect.

**Zero tolerance for sexual harassment**

**Sue Ferns** *(Prospect)* moved Emergency Motion 1.

She said: Colleagues, did you know that on 10th August, the TUC issued record media coverage -- over 500 million mentions in the UK, including all the big broadcast media shows, the story trending on Twitter, plus wide coverage in the international press (including CNN and Newsweek) -- and it was not about industrial action, the Trade Union Act or Brexit. It was about this report, “Still just a bit of banter?”

Based on a major survey undertaken with the Everyday Sexism Project, it tells us three important things: (1) sexual harassment at work is an important issue that matters to lots of people; (2) it is an issue on which unions have a legitimate voice; and (3) it takes us into areas of the economy that are not our established territory. This is because, colleagues, it is young women who are most likely to experience sexual harassment. Nearly two-thirds of women under 25 reported incidents of harassment. Many of them are in precarious forms of employment and are almost certainly unable to take legal redress, even if they were courageous enough to do so, because of the unaffordability of employment tribunal fees. This is an issue, Congress, that the TUC’s new campaign plan to reach out to young workers simply cannot ignore.

It is not only a problem for younger workers. Over 50% of all surveyed respondents had experienced sexual harassment at work. Four out of five did not report it to their employer and just 1% confided in their union rep. For sure, Prospect members in professional roles have experienced it. We have recently had a claim involving a member working in a government agency. Following a change in role, she raised a grievance against her manager about sexual harassment and bullying, much of which was upheld. It was untenable for her to continue working with the manager in question, but the employer’s response was to move her to a less desirable role with long-term consequences for her pay and career development. Following a preliminary hearing and months of preparation for her legal claim, the case was settled shortly before a scheduled 12-day hearing. As a result, she was re-graded, received compensation and an apology. Most importantly, she was able to get her career back on track. Our member was extremely brave to fight her corner. She was lucky to have great support from other women in her workplace and being in a union meant that she had a Prospect rep and our legal team to ensure a successful outcome.

The report indicates that women working in male-dominated industries are more likely to experience sexual harassment and our own investigation this summer into the provision of women’s personal protective equipment bears this out. I do not want to give any credence to the derogatory comments that women told us they are routinely subjected to simply for wearing their required work-wear so I will not will not repeat them here, but it is certainly the case that, like the women surveyed by the TUC, our members have experienced humiliation and a sense of being undermined. One member explained that she ended up taking time off sick while pregnant rather than face the humiliation of a PPD, which became even more ill-fitting and uncomfortable, and others have said that they feel utterly unprofessional.

So, as the motion says, despite good union initiative to combat sexual harassment, further action is urgently needed to make this a workplace issue for everyone. We must keep a clear focus on this issue and maintain the momentum generated by this excellent report. We need to work together to challenge and then change these unacceptable behaviours, supporting unions to do this important work and, where we can, working with employers too.

Everyday casual sexism is not acceptable. Sexual harassment is not just banter and it can do long-term damage so let us not tolerate it and let us work together to make a positive union difference. Congress, I move. *(Applause)*

**John Hannett** *(Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers)* seconded Emergency Motion 1.

He said: Congress, USDAW is very pleased to be seconding this extremely important emergency motion and also supporting the words used in the address by Sue, bringing very clearly to attention what this issue is, what it means and why we should campaign against harassment.

I would also like to join with Sue in congratulating the TUC for their recently published groundbreaking research to which she referred, “Just a bit of banter?” It is often a term used by the perpetrator as an excuse: “You took out of context the meaning of what I said.” Delegates, this important research sheds light on an issue that, for far too long, has been kept in the dark. Not only does it highlight the nature and extent of sexual harassment in the workplace, but its publication generated a great deal of media interest as was said, prompting a debate that went way beyond the confines of the trade union Movement and rightly so, putting this issue back where it belongs, back on the agenda of employers (who have a responsibility to do the right thing), policymakers and politicians.

Congress, the scale of sexual harassment at work is truly shocking. The effect on the individual, of course, is profound and deeply wounding. For many years, my union, USDAW, together with unions both here and abroad, have been equipping union representatives with the knowledge they need not only to support women who experience sexual harassment, but to prevent it from happening in the future. We have been working with employers to negotiate robust harassment policies and to make to the words of the policy come to life in practice. It is not just the words on the paper, but a determination for it to be stamped out wherever it exists. They are policies that deliver rapid results for those on the receiving end of harassment, whether it is in the shop, the office or on the workhouse floor.

USDAW has been campaigning against sexual violence, abuse and harassment for many years and my union will continue to do so in the future. I encourage union activists to display materials and organise activities and send out the unequivocal message to a wider audience that harassment has no place whatsoever in the 21st century workplace. In USDAW, we have been bringing our men and women members together who may have been affected by such harassment. So, we must learn more about the issue and ensure that the work is grounded in the reality of their lives and their experiences.

Despite all these initiatives, sexual harassment persists and continues to damage the working lives of many women workers. Therefore, we welcome Prospect’s emergency motion and we are delighted to add our support. We fully support their call for urgent action. Congress, this is an incredibly important motion. It goes to the very heart of why we came together in the trade union Movement: to deliver equality and justice for all workers, to promote respect and dignity and rid every workplace of violence, abuse and harassment. Please support this motion. *(Applause)*

**Mary McReynolds** *(Unite the Union)* supported the motion.

She said: Congress, as a trade unionist who has been about and an activist for decades, it is a soul-destroying task for me to have to stand here and support this motion. What has happened to our society that this evil is still manifest?

I have recently had to represent a member, a very experienced medical secretary in the health service, who is also a long-time friend, who has been subjected to this abuse. As a consequence, she has had her private life exposed with a trauma she underwent as a student in a summer job relived. Her husband has been devastated because he did not know about this and her beautiful daughters have been exposed to the trauma that their beloved mother is suffering. This is a double blow because she is not feeling any support from her employer. As a manager, she is so afraid of putting a foot wrong against the perpetrator of this that they are almost demonising her.

Congress, let us get rid of this heinous crime and culture in society for good. Wolf-whistling, pawing young girls, slipping in behind them at their workstations to pretend to leave a file by them and commenting on tattoos they may have on the back of their neck is unacceptable. It does not make anybody a big fellow or a big girl. Congress, please support the motion. *(Applause)*

**Karla Wheeler** *(National Union of Teachers)* supported the motion.

She said: Sexual violence, domestic violence, stalking, trafficking, harmful practices (including female genitalia mutilation) and honour-based violence are not exempt from our time or our shores and we are all against this, of course. However, there are apparently “minor” things at work.

The campaign “End Violence against Women” is finding that young women are still today, in the 21st century, subjected to everyday sexism. This may not seem serious when we do not use terms such as “violence”, “trafficking” or “harmful practices”, but they are very much damaging to the life, health and safety of young people at work, who can become depressed, fearful and anxious. The TUC’s report, “Still just a bit of banter?” not only highlights and provides important evidence about the scale of sexual harassment at work, but outlines how women are disempowered with what is considered as “just a bit of a laugh”.

For those of you who need a picture painted, the Everyday Sexism website gives examples – do check it out – of how a young farmers’ market worker reported that she was frequently touched inappropriately, watched as she bent over (making her very self-conscious), had comments made about the size of her breasts as she raised her hands to collect objects and was also treated aggressively for turning down the proposition of a much older man. That is all without anyone to whom to report this. We also have the example of the female worker who, with a male caretaker, was fearful to report how he had put his arm around her and kissed her for fear of it being her fault or being deemed a troublemaker.

The NUT highlight in their bullying and harassment policy certain features of harassment including that, in some schools, female teachers are being encouraged to ignore sexual language between pupils or that which is directed at them because “boys will be boys” or, “It’s just a joke.” Now, in the 1970s, it was commonplace for women to be verbally and sexually assaulted with no consequence. In the 1980s, this was beginning to be challenged. In the 1990s, it became publicly unacceptable, but it was still there. In the noughties, it seemed to have gone underground, but the rise of easily accessible online pornographic material, coupled with negative and the highly-sexualised portrayal of women in music videos or even in commercial-song lyrics, seems to have encouraged negative changes in the way in which many young men in schools often refer to, and view, women as sexual objects.

Such discourse disempowers the victim, male or female, empowering the perpetrator. After all, power and control is the bedrock of sexual harassment, isn’t it? We urge Congress to push for unions to introduce stronger initiatives to encourage workers to report all forms of sexual harassment to their unions as well as their employers, no matter how trivial they think they are. We should offer training and support among employers to recognise sexual harassment as not just being banter and to positively engage with young workers in particular to eradicate sexual harassment in the workplace. *(Applause)*

**The President:** There is no right of reply from Prospect so we will move to the vote on Emergency Motion 1. Will all those in favour please show? Will all those against please show? There is a very clear message from this Congress – zero tolerance for sexual harassment. *(Applause)*

*\* Emergency Motion 1 was CARRIED*

**The President:** Congress, that completes our business for this afternoon, you might be pleased to hear. May I remind delegates that there are various meetings taking place this evening and details of them are displayed on all the screens or they are in the Congress guide. Congress is now adjourned until 9.30 tomorrow evening. Have a great evening. Thank you.

*Congress adjourned at 6.40 p.m.*