



---

# Unions want €1bn jobs fund

UNION leaders yesterday called for a €1billion fund to tackle the jobs crisis as it tries to face down the Government over proposed cuts to public-sector pay and welfare. Congress believes the financial package would promote a job-sharing initiative, with workers paying taxes while being retrained on days off, and fund projects in the construction sector. The umbrella group also demanded homeowners at risk of repossession be given three years to sort out their finances. The measures were outlined in an updated ten-point plan Congress claimed should be included in the upcoming budget. Congress also demanded: no cuts to wages or social welfare; vital services to be exempt from cuts; a higher rate of tax for the very rich; and reform of the banks. Elsewhere, former Bank of England policymaker David Blanchflower told an economics workshop in UCD that Finance Minister Brian Lenihan's proposed €4billion spending cuts could 'drive a recession into a depression' with up to one in four people out of work. He said Ireland needed to plan to pay off its national debt but should renegotiate a longer time in which to do so.



**Warning: Blanchflower**