ANDREW MARR:
There’s no doubt the economic recovery is underway, but beyond home owners in London and the South East, are the benefits being felt around the country? How do things look from Liverpool where the annual TUC is indeed taking place this week, kicking off the conference season? I’m joined now by the TUC Leader Frances O’Grady. Welcome Frances O’Grady.

FRANCES O’GRADY:
Good morning.

ANDREW MARR:
The big news I suspect from the TUC is going to be further strikes coming in October in support of claims for higher pay, particularly in the public sector. Is that right?

FRANCES O'GRADY:
Well the big thing for the TUC this year is Britain needs a pay rise, and that’s because we’ve seen workers not sharing in the benefits of economic recovery and taking real pay cuts in both the private and the public sector year on year out. And I think there are three things delegates here want to hear from the Chancellor: why can’t we have a
higher minimum wage? What’s this government doing to spread the living wage? And why did he reject that recommendation of the independent pay review body for health workers, nurses and midwives for a one per cent increase and tell them they’d get nothing?

**ANDREW MARR:**
So what do the TUC do about this? Are we going to see industrial action later in the year?

**FRANCES O'GRADY:**
I think we’ll see a mix of industrial action and protests. Clearly some ballots are still happening and we’ll have to see the results of those. But we’ve got a big demonstration on 18th October – Britain Needs a Pay Rise – that I think will be a rallying point for those workers who do take strike action and everybody else who supports them.

**ANDREW MARR:**
Of course not everybody is not going to have a pay rise. Some people are getting a 10 per cent pay rise. MPs are getting a 10 per cent pay rise. What message do you think that sends? That was a default question for you.

**FRANCES O’GRADY:**
Well of course MPs should get a fair pay rise too, but I think this will confirm the sense that we’re led by a Conservative Government that is so out of touch with how insulted ordinary people feel who are just not seeing the benefits of the economic recovery that the Chancellor keeps telling us about. They’re not feeling it in their pay packets.

**ANDREW MARR:**
What about the story in The Sunday Times today that one union is going to have as it were hit squads going round to the houses of the owners of companies they are targeting and indeed politicians like Boris Johnson confronting them directly? Is that the kind of thing you feel comfortable with?
FRANCES O’GRADY:
Well I think this is actually a very old story about protests against blacklisting on Crossrail and I think the union’s been very clear that it would only engage in lawful protest. But we do have a right to demonstrate in this country and as long as we abide by the law, as long as the police who were there at the time don’t see any problem, then I think other people should be very careful about playing fast and loose with our civil liberties.

ANDREW MARR:
But including outside people’s homes?

FRANCES O’GRADY:
The test here is whether it’s a lawful protest and of course the police are in attendance to judge just that. But let’s be clear. This was about construction workers standing up for their fellow workers on key issues like health and safety losing their livelihoods as a result of a company blacklist. That was the cause of the problem and now that’s been resolved.

ANDREW MARR:
Frances O’Grady, it looks very sunny there in Liverpool. Have a good week and thank you very much for joining us.

FRANCES O’GRADY:
It is.

ANDREW MARR:
Thank you.

FRANCES O’GRADY:
Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS