



Yes to jobs and solidarity - No to austerity

On 14 November 2012, the European trade union movement will gather to protest against the austerity measures that are dragging Europe into stagnation. Europe must take a new course. It needs to lead policies that create workplaces and put an end to social cutdowns.

On this day of action, LO extends its warmest greetings of solidarity to our European colleagues. The trade union movements in all countries must stand together and fight for quality jobs and decent working conditions.

The Danish trade unions fully support this day of action which is the first step in a long term campaign to ensure that 2014 will see the election of a new European Parliament which will contribute to the fight for a better future for Europe's workers.

The austerity measures dictated by the EU in a number of countries in southern Europe demonstrate the disastrous consequences it can have to leave it to politicians to regulate pay and working conditions. In the Danish trade union movement, we believe that the best security for workers, also during times of crisis, is to have collective agreements that ensure decent pay and working conditions. LO has therefore, in cooperation with FTF, launched an information campaign on the advantages of a labour market which is regulated by means of collective agreements.

The problem is not the EU, but it is the way in which the EU is led by the current Commission and by the majority in the Council of Ministers. The EU has the opportunity to coordinate financial and political cooperation to create the preconditions for growth and employment in Europe. This can be done by means of, among other things, the policy of cohesion and through a further development of infrastructure in Europe, such as, for example, the Connecting Europe Facility. Furthermore, Europe needs massive investments into energy efficient production and the development of green energy.

In stead, the austerity agenda is maintained through austerity measures that handcuff the member states and contribute to the rapidly increasing unemployment rates, which particularly affect the young severely - Europe's future. We are already seeing the negative consequences of these policies, among other things, in the rise of right wing nationalist movements in Europe.

Another serious threat against welfare and stability in the European labour markets is when low-paid foreign workers are used to undermine existing national pay levels by means of social dumping. The Commission has been very slow to present proposals for solutions to this growing problem for Europe's workers.

LO therefore joins our European colleagues in encouraging everyone to participate actively in the campaign leading up to the election for the European Parliament in 2014 in order to promote the election of a Parliament of progressive politicians that are not tied down by neo-liberal thinking.

With its focus on market liberalization and competition in all fields, the current Commission contributes to worsening the crisis. We have just witnessed that, for the second successive year, the Commission has presented a working programme that does not focus on workers. The necessary revisions of the EU's strategies for health & safety at work is postponed for the second time and, in stead, the so-called "smart regulation" is emphasized. With this initiative, the Commission puts the health & safety for workers in small and medium-sized companies in jeopardy.

It is high time to set a new course for Europe. 25.2% of the Spanish are now unemployed and 7.5 million young persons don't have job. If these young people do not get the training & education they need, Europe will, in a few years, lack qualified manpower.

We all wish you a good ETUC day of action on 14 November.