

Resolution of the Mediterranean Trade Unions 26-27 June 2023

Europe and all Mediterranean area are in a difficult situation, due to the economic crisis caused by the pandemic and the war raging in the heart of the continent.

The economic crisis has had a severe impact on workers, with a sharp rise in the cost of living and wages insufficient to cope with inflation.

European governments and the EU seem to have learned nothing from the pandemic, which has highlighted the importance and necessity of public services; public health in all European countries and around the world has been put to the test, but it has been the only bulwark against the pandemic, even at the cost of the lives of health and social services workers.

What was done during the pandemic by the health services of the various countries, and by the public services that never stopped providing services to citizens, showed that public services cannot be considered a cost but a virtuous investment that returns social value, improving the lives of citizens, and a fundamental tool for reducing inequalities.

The trade unions signing this resolution therefore strongly support the decision taken at the ETUC congress for a European mobilization to prevent a return to austerity measures following the Commission's revision of the Stability Pact and economic governance.

The resolution clearly states that there is a risk of pushing our national systems towards restrictive policies that hinder necessary economic and social investments, and that it is necessary for all European trade unions to mobilize to invest in quality public services that guarantee citizens' rights, health, care and public services.

The signatory trade unions join their struggles in defence of public services within the ETUC's big European mobilization, that they will join together with EPSU.

Public services, as bearers of the rights of all citizens, must be defended throughout Europe and the world and, with this resolution, the signatories commit themselves, also in view of the forthcoming EPSU Congress, to defend an efficient public service, as well as to defend the right to collective bargaining, social dialogue, adequate wages and decent working conditions.

The Mediterranean Group considers important the issue of membership growth, which is up to the responsibility of all national organisations, but which must also be promoted through EPSU, at all levels and by all means, especially by promoting collective bargaining and national collective agreements.

In Europe and worldwide, right-wing winds are blowing against the rights of citizens, migrants and the LGBTQI+ community.

The signatories therefore commit themselves, also within EPSU, to relaunch the *Eucare* network of welcoming workers and to fight against civil rights violations at all levels.

Therefore, the social and the welfare state in Europe and the Mediterranean area, born after the Second World War and based on universal public services, accessible to all citizens and capable of responding to the basic needs and expectations of the population, is a consolidated right that the neoliberal policies exercised in a radical manner over the last 15

years have deteriorated, especially through underfunding in budget laws and through chronic underfunding costs for personnel, necessary for the proper functioning of these public services.

All this gradually led to a reduction in citizens' satisfaction with essential services, which paved the way for the expansion of private services, both those financed by contract or outsourced from state budgets, and those provided directly by sectors that could afford to pay for them, further increasing social inequalities.

In the face of the advance in our continent and the world of extreme right-wing ideologies, which accentuate exclusionary individualism and combat collective efforts for the progress of the whole society, as European trade union movement, and in particular as trade union organisations defending the rights of workers in public services we believe that there is an urgent need for a political change to ensure that the European institutions and each of the European states develop policies that protect and strengthen the rights of citizens, and we therefore propose a EUROPEAN UNION PACT FOR PUBLIC SERVICES.

A common commitment to be reaffirmed and relaunched, including at the next EPSU congress and in the run-up to the European elections, it is in fact to oppose the advance of the extreme right, which for years has been driving the whole of Europe and the world backwards, with regressive economic policies aimed at privatising public services and increasing profits by reducing the social perimeter of the state.

The signatory trade unions share the will to pursue the demands shared here also within EPSU and at the next congress, contributing to:

1. A strong defence of public services, of their social value, in the face of privatisation and attacks by multinationals.
2. The defence of ever stronger collective bargaining throughout Europe and the Mediterranean area, for a social dialogue at national and European level that does not see States and Commission backing down.
3. For a governance reform that recognises the public as a value (not as a cost) and that guarantees fundamental rights and services.
4. For new staff recruitment to ensure adequate staffing and services
5. For adequate wages, for the renewal of national collective agreements and for the defence of citizens' fundamental and social rights.
6. For a defence of the real purchasing power of wages, also threatened by unilateral decisions of European bodies, such as the increase of interest rates on loans and mortgages.
7. For a Europe of peace that repudiates war and engages in strong diplomacy, that stands in solidarity and does not enclose itself in a fortress, and that guarantees humanitarian channels for migration.
8. Against the advance of right-wingers and a culture of backwardness that violates people's civil and social rights.

9. For budget laws and tax measures that guarantee public welfare policies and the welfare state.

10. For the guarantee of public procurement that respects workers' rights, promotes social clauses and respects collective bargaining.

11. Furthermore, the Mediterranean Group draws attention to new technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) methods. Of course, we have to use these new tools as part of our activities at local, sectoral and national level, always with a view to improving public services in order to avoid privatization and pursuing the guarantee of no job losses.