EPSU call for Joint Action
For a change in European economic policy
No to Austerity
For Jobs, Public Services, Social Rights and Democracy

- No to Austerity and for a change in European economic policy Respect for the autonomy of the social partners, collective bargaining and collective agreements
- For Jobs, Public Services, social rights and a democratic and social Europe

The European Union and the countries of the Eurozone are experiencing the worst crisis in history. It affects working men and women, families and communities. Recent measures in response to this by the European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, Council and European Central Bank) include:
- Enlarging the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and giving it new roles,
- Approving the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) and
- Adopting the so-called 6 pack with the measures to prevent and correct excessive deficits, excessive debts and macro-economic imbalances, which also sets out the requirements for national fiscal (budgetary) frameworks.

Despite all of this, turmoil has continued on the financial markets and economic growth has slumped.

The EPSU Executive Committee considered these developments at its meeting on 8-9 November 2011. It agreed that:
- There is an urgent need to change Europe’s economic policy away from austerity, precarious jobs and inequality towards sustainable development, fair taxation, investment in public services, more equality and less poverty.
- EPSU rejects the attacks on fundamental social and trade union rights which take place in several EU Member States. We demand that governments and employers stop using the crisis to roll back working people’s protection against exploitation. It is unacceptable that the European Central Bank (ECB) through secret letters or the Troika (International Monetary Fund, ECB and European Commission) intervene in collective bargaining and make changes to labour legislation conditional for countries to receive EU support. They have no legitimate right or mandate to enforce these changes.

EPSU strives for a European Union that is based on democratic values, in which fundamental rights have priority over the internal market. Europe’s government leaders must respect the autonomy of the social partners and the role of trade unions to defend workers at all levels. The right to strike is the ultimate way for workers to defend themselves against employers and governments that take decisions influencing their rights, jobs, pay and conditions.

- EPSU demands a new economic policy. This new European economic policy should be reflected in the next Annual Growth Survey. Concretely:
  - A new European investment plan to boost the economy, stimulating green jobs and putting Europe on a road to sustainable development; And agreeing the instruments to finance the investment;
  - Measures and guidelines to attack precarious work and low wages – ensuring equal pay for work of equal value;
✓ Approving and implementing the proposals for:
  o A Financial Transactions Tax (FTT) in the EU, as a first step towards a global FTT, contributing to financing public common goods and services. Such a tax should be operational by 2013.
  o The Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base with a minimum tax rate.
✓ Introducing proposals for coordinated action to have a tax on the rich as already proposed in several countries;
✓ Stepping up action to end tax heavens, fight corruption and tax fraud;
✓ Measures to address the failing banking system, to ensure a functional separation between investment (speculative) and retail & commercial banking; to end the greedy bonus culture;
✓ Measures to reduce poverty and social exclusion;
✓ Promotion of collective bargaining and social dialogue.

In support of these demands the EPSU affiliates agree to make EPSU’s common demands visible by:
  • Organising actions in the week of 30 November 2011. This will give a signal to the Council of Ministers for Economic and Financial Affairs (30/11), Council of Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs (1/12) and the European Council (9/12)