# Solidarity statement for the Portuguese firefighters

(19 June 2017) EPSU expresses its condolences to the families, friends and co-workers of the 62 people that tragically lost their lives, this weekend, in the terrible wildfire that engulfed the Portuguese,city of Pedrogao Grande. Our thoughts are with all the firefighters and many other public service workers, from Portugal and beyond, who are still fighting the fire on the ground.

Portugal has been too frequently hit by such wildfires in recent years. The two main confederations – CGTP-IN and UGT issued a statement requesting that the government effectively tackle this wildfire. They also stressed that we all need to keep in mind that this latest fire hides many of the other social problems which contributed to this disaster (read the CGTP-IN statement here and UGT)

EPSU General Secretary Jan Willem Goudriaan on behalf of EPSU's affiliates "*Our thoughts are naturally with all of those who have been affected by this tragedy: families, friends, co-workers and so many others*". He adds that "*as recently in London as now in Portugal, public sector workers have been on the frontline and once again prove their courage and dedication*".

EPSU has repeatedly deplored the fact that many European firefighters services are understaffed and under resourced due to austerity policies (read the EPSU statement firefighters against austerity).

While the European Commission has created a European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) for **coordinating** a European wide response, **such responses** remains extremely limited. **There is also clearly an urgent need for local climate change solutions, these are desperately needed if more fires and catastrophes are to be avoided**. A recent statement from the EPSU Firefighters Network deals with this question **in more depth** and **proposes numerous answers** (read the EPSU Firefighters Network statement on concrete steps to fight climate change).

Portugal

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