

On May Day Europe's Workers unite for a pay rise

(28 April 2017) Join a trade union and defend your rights and our values, this is our clarion call to all workers on this May 1st, this International Workers Day. Today is not only a celebration of workers struggles and victories in days gone by. Today on International Workers Day we are reminded of the power of unions to defend workers rights, to raise workers pay, to improve working conditions and stand up for solidarity and democracy in the workplace and in society.

Almost a decade of austerity policies, following the economic crash of 2007-8, has seen workers' wages decrease, collective bargaining agreements dismantled and work conditions worsening. Workers and low-income households have paid the highest price for a crisis they did not cause. This is why on this May Day, public service unions say once again we need an end to austerity policies. We say European workers need a pay rise. Workers' pay rises will drive economic growth and tackle inequality.

And as our proud history underlines – it will not be employers or governments that hand over money. The best way to get a pay rise is to join a union. This gives us a strong voice at the workplace and when we bargain with the employers. The dismantling of collective bargaining agreements in many countries has to be reversed and collective bargaining strengthened. Workers covered by collective agreements are significantly better off than those who are not and including regarding pensions, work-life balance and protection.

Organising and recruitment to build our voice and have strong unions helps our work when bargaining, the heart of much of our trade union activity. It delivers better pay, better conditions and benefits for workers. It gives the unions and in particular public services unions the strength to seek an end to austerity and change towards different economic policies. We seek to end the gender pay and pension gap and to address precarious jobs. We demand greater investment in Europe's public services and in addressing climate change. This can be done through greater tax justice with stronger measures to tackle tax avoidance.

On this first May, we stand up for solidarity and our democratic values in the EU and

Europe. Workers across workplaces, cultures and borders say no to the xenophobia, racism and nationalism surging. We stand with our union brothers and sisters facing repression and authoritarian rule. The history of our European and global union movement, the struggles of working women and men across the globe to build a better future gives us the inspiration and hope for Another Europe, Another World.

Yes, workers of the world unite. Workers are always better off in a union with the union fighting for their rights.

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