

Trade unions leaders ask for a change of course to the European Council

(15 December) The European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) demonstrated today from 11am at Schuman on the eve of the last European Council of the European Union of 2010.

Trade union leaders Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, EPSU General Secretary, John Monks, ETUC General Secretary, Anne-Marie Perret, EPSU President and Joël Decaillon, Deputy General Secretary demanded the EU to change its current route of cuts and austerity.

Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, EPSU General Secretary said that *“It is deeply tragic that the current plans to reduce deficits put the burden of the crisis almost squarely on the shoulders of those that are not the cause: nurses, fire-fighters, teachers, street cleaners, tax inspectors, pensioners and many others. Many are low and middle income wage earners who feel the pain when end of year and holiday pay entitlements are taken away, wages frozen or worse, cut. The wealthy, corporations and especially banks and speculators do not see the same level of cuts imposed on them. For all of this we are protesting today 15 December”*.

The protest was organised by the European unions to show solidarity with their affiliates that were demonstrating in several European countries such as Spain, France, Greece, Czech Republic, etc (and tomorrow in Cyprus).

Trade unions in Europe do not find it fair that workers are paying the burden of the crisis.

In that sense, **Anne Marie Perret**, EPSU President stated that *“EPSU supports progressive and sufficient taxation which is essential to finance quality public services for all and to redistribute income and wealth in society.”* **John Monks**, General Secretary of the ETUC added that *“Europe needs a common project that goes beyond cuts and austerity and to focus on job and growth”*.

For EPSU, the plans to reduce public spending and to cut jobs in public services are also the wrong answer. They endanger the prospects for growth and the European

Social Model of which public services are an essential part. On the other hand, there is no clear lead by the European Council or the Commission for a Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) or investment in changing the productive model for a more sustainable Europe.

EPSU will continue to protest and demonstrate to make the voices of public sector workers heard, both in Brussels and during the Hungarian Presidency in Budapest.

For more information Pablo Sanchez, psanchez@epsu.org, 00 32 (0) 4 74 62 66 33

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