

EPSU solidarity with patent office workers

(14 December 2016) EPSU has sent its support to members of the SUEPO trade union who have organised a demonstration in Munich today in support of employee and trade union rights at the European Patent Office (EPO). The demonstration is timed to coincide with the EPO's Administrative Council meeting and EPSU has written to all members of the council urging them to take urgent action to resolve the long-running problems at the EPO.

Dismissals and intimidation of staff representatives have been an issue since at least 2013, with EPO President Benoit Battistelli flouting proper procedures and violating workers' rights, even going so far as to ignore a ruling by the Dutch courts. The dismissal of a staff representative at the EPO office The Hague is the latest development, with the SUEPO members taking to the streets in protest.

The International Labour Office has also challenged EPO management. Its Administrative Tribunal ruled that the EPO had failed to include a representative of the Central Staff Committee on its Appeals Committee and so had to reconsider a staff member's appeal once the Committee had been properly constituted.

EPSU general secretary Jan Willem Goudriaan said: "Battistelli seems intent on destroying the union. This kind of behaviour is unacceptable for any administration on the territory of a Member State of the European Union. I hope that the EPO Administrative Council responds to our call and the actions taken by SUEPO and moves quickly to restore basic employee and trade union rights in the organisation."

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