

## **Standing up for workers' interests - in small and larger ways**

Date

Monday, April 9, 2018 - 12:00

The results of the Hungarian parliamentary elections brought back its authoritarian prime minister Orban with close to 50% of the votes and a large majority in Parliament Sunday 8th April. The main opposition is the extreme right wing party Jobbik. The observers of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (O.S.C.E) said that Fidesz had used the resources of the state on a “very large” scale to assist its chances of winning. The head of the mission of the OSCE claimed that intimidation, xenophobic rhetoric, media bias and opaque campaign financing reduced the space for political debate. One of the first measures of the new government is announced to be a crackdown on the organisations that criticise the government’s anti-migration policies. This can easily spill over in attacks on other organisations including unions. Working with the Hungarian affiliates will be very important these next years.

We also need a European Commission that will defend European values and democratic processes especially against such authoritarian governments. It should hence be exemplary itself. The decision on the [social partner agreement](#) lacks all of those elements. It undermines trust in the Commission at a time we need it.

Such things do matter as it casts a shadow over the work of the European Commission and its staff abroad. It make them less effective in standing up to political interference. Our Macedonian colleagues in the public energy company ELEM are the target of management attacks such as captive meetings in which union members are asked to become members of an alternative yellow union. Political interference is suspected. We are supporting the union to defend its members and seek change.

Workers across Europe are fighting for pay increases. Let us know of your actions. Our solidarity is with all of you involved in struggle for better pay and conditions. And lastly, 23 April European and global unions are called upon to take action in support of Lula the former President and trade union leader in Brazil, jailed on

trumped up charges to prevent him representing workers' and poor people's interests. Please be in touch with your national centres to join the actions organized.

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