

Solidarity with refugees on International Migrants Day

(18 December 2015) Violent conflict, human rights violations, poverty and the rising frequency of natural disasters linked to climate change are forcing men, women and children to flee their homes at a rate never before seen. Nearly 60 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced due to conflict and violence in 2014, including in Europe. Many are risking their lives in terrifying routes across land and sea to reach safer shores. This year alone, 3,406 people have died as they attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. 930,000 have sought refuge in the European Union this year.

On International Migrants Day, EPSU remember this loss of life. We call on global leaders to unite in providing support to all those who continue to flee. We need to combat xenophobia with community and tackle fear with solidarity.

This means supporting the regions and public service workers providing emergency and ongoing food, aid and shelter to refugees at our borders and in our communities day in day out. The countries suffering the deepest cuts to their public services, in the south and east of Europe, are dealing with the overwhelming majority of new arrivals. Turning our backs on them will not make the crisis go away; pursuing ever harsher austerity measures will only make the task of helping our fellow human beings even more difficult.

Public service workers registering and sheltering asylum seekers are under strain due to the large number of refugees. Workers in municipalities and other services in some countries face unseen workloads handling the daily new arrivals. Finding homes, ensuring children can attend school and that all can engage in meaningful activities are public service workers' ongoing concerns, but years of austerity measures and budget cuts have led to a lack of staff. Resources are needed to ensure longer-term integration in the labour market and our societies.

This Friday 18th December we join with [the European Trade Union Confederation](#) (ETUC) in calling upon EU institutions and national governments to come together

for better management of the refugee crisis and greater inclusion of refugees in our communities. The [ETUC Executive Committee has called on](#) the EU Council to show greater solidarity between Member States. Governments should recognise the role trade unions and employers play in supporting integration policy. We stand with our international partner organisation Public Services International (PSI) in support of the public services and their workers across Europe facing brutal cuts in the name of fiscal austerity. We offer our solidarity to members of our Belgian affiliates FGTB and CSC who are today holding a rally in support of undocumented migrants at Place du Béguinage in Brussels.

- [EPSU Executive Committee statement April 2015 - EU must assume its responsibility on the migration and asylum crisis in Mediterranean and Aegean Seas](#)
- [Joint PSI/EPSU statement on International Migrants Day](#)

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