

EPSU sends its support to Greek unions in their defence of health, education and social spending

(11 December 2013) The ADEDY civil service confederation and its affiliated federations are organising a one-day strike and demonstration today in protest at job cuts in health and education and cuts in spending in these and other areas of social welfare. On Saturday 7 December the Greek parliament approved another austerity budget which will mean another €3 billion of cuts to public services resulting in loss of jobs and deterioration of the quality and standards of public services. The health sector has already seen major cutbacks and restructuring and ADEDY reports that 200 intensive care beds remain closed because of the lack of staff while mental health provision has been undermined by the closure of psychiatric hospitals. Patients are not only seeing essential services cut but are having to pay more for their treatments and as many as 3.5 million people are not covered by health insurance. Workers across the public sector – in health, education, social security, local government and central administration have faced layoffs and suspensions. Administrative staff at the University of Athens are entering their 13th week of strike and are managing to keep up their fight against layoffs and in defence of the public university education. Tax inspectors have seen their numbers slashed by half. This continues to allow the rich and wealthy to escape paying their fair contribution. Poverty is increasing, unemployment remains at record levels and the government and European Commission call this an effective policy to restore economic growth and competitiveness. The Greek unions and EPSU completely reject this view. We advocate a policy of investment in industry, public infrastructure and public services in Greece, Portugal and the rest of the EU to address economic growth and create jobs as laid out in the proposals of the ETUC for a A New Path For Europe: Plan for investment, Sustainable Growth and Quality Jobs. EPSU sends its solidarity to the Greek public service workers, their unions and ADEDY who are also calling on pensioners and all other citizens to join the demonstration and actively support the strike to defend public services.

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