



29 November 2011

Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen
Minister of Finance Jutta Urpilainen
Minister of Labour Lauri Ihalainen

European Public Sector Unions:

Trade union and democratic rights must not be bypassed when managing the economic crisis

On 30 November 2011, public sector unions across Europe are organising various actions to protest against the way in which the economic crisis is being managed. The messages are targeted at the EU's Council of Finance Ministers (on 30 November 2011), Council of Labour Ministers (on 1 December 2011) and the European Council meeting to be held on 8 December 2011. The Finnish public sector unions are expressing their concern by addressing a letter to Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen, Minister of Finance Jutta Urpilainen and Minister of Labour Lauri Ihalainen.

The public sector unions are deeply concerned about the way in which the crisis-stricken countries are being treated as the economic crisis is being managed. The trade union movement has not been consulted and it has been kept in the dark about the major structural changes that the crisis countries are being forced to undertake. The citizens have not been heard either.

The unions demand the involvement of the social partners and transparency in the actions taken to manage the crisis. The dialogue between the social partners and the trade unions' right to defend their members at every level must be respected in all of the processes. The social partners must have the right to freely negotiate the terms of employment in all situations.

The autonomy of the social partners during wage and salary negotiations should not be weakened, as it would push decision-making even further away from those affected by the decisions. Work issues must primarily be resolved between employees and employers. The social partners' right to negotiate independently is included in the Treaties of the European Union. Labour markets should be developed through co-operation, not by imposing decisions from the outside.

The public sector unions disapprove of the intervention of the Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank in the labour-market autonomy of the crisis-stricken countries. This troika has, among other things, demanded adjustments to wages, salaries and pension schemes, the dissolution of collective

bargaining systems and weakening of the protection against dismissal. Amendments to labour legislation have also been demanded as a condition for receiving funding from the EU. According to the European Federation of Public Service Unions, EPSU, the European Central Bank has demanded that the Italian government privatise local services, even though the majority of citizens wish to maintain them as local government services.

These issues do not fall under the EU's competence and the procedures in question disregard trade union and democratic rights and undermine the citizens' faith in a common union.

Finnish Public Services Unions' EU Working Party FIPSU

Antti Palola
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EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It comprises almost 8 million public service workers from 275 trade unions.

The Finnish Public Services Unions' EU Working Party FIPSU's affiliates are:

Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors (JHL)
Federation of Public and Private Sector Employees (JYTY)
Confederation of Salaried Employees (Pardia)
Finnish Union of Practical Nurses (SuPer)
Union of Health Care and Social Professionals (Tehy)
Technics and Health (KTN)
Akava Special Branches
Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ)
Union of Professional Social Workers (Talentia)