

## Portugal

### Information and statement from STAL 14.4

Today, under the pretext of combating the virus, the most gross violations occur. Labour rights are severely diminished and there is a widespread violation of labour law, especially in the private sector. In Portugal, where the state of emergency also prevails, the right for union structures to participate in drafting labour legislation has been suspended. In this period, public administration workers are subject to being forced to change their working hours, change their professional functions, change the location of the work and the hour banks - forms of flexibility and an attack on labour rights since always fought by us.

The economic crisis is getting worse. According to calculations by economist Eugénio Rosa, in just one month, 163 thousand workers have lost their jobs, 981 thousand are out of work and 1 million and 766 thousand have already suffered a significant reduction in their income. The Prime Minister, Antonio Costa, said he was not available to re-apply an austerity policy. It is good to say that, but it must be borne in mind that austerity has already started for more than 1.8m Portuguese.

Workers in the so-called simplified lay-off regime, which has been extended to meet the demands of employers, represent a cut in wages, do not actually prohibit dismissals, weaken the employment relationship and have recessive effects. Maintaining employment and income is a necessity, not only for the affected workers, but for the economy itself: it allows to endure consumption or limit its fall (Banco de Portugal predicts -4.8% in the most adverse scenario); and prevents qualified labour from being destroyed, as in the previous crisis.

If no measures are taken, the Bank of Portugal's projection that points to a reduction in employment of 5.2% and an unemployment rate of 11.7% can materialize. Responses to the crisis favour large companies more, to the detriment of micro, small and medium-sized companies, and workers, who are once again hit hard.

As far as the European Union (EU) is concerned, the answer also remains far below what is required, and is being determined by the interests of the great powers, as was made clear by the "disgusting" statements by the Dutch Finance Minister, as well as, and mainly, by the conclusions of the Eurogroup meeting, in which the planned "aid" is nothing more than adding more debt that we will have to pay in the future with more taxes and austerity. At a time when people are still dying in Portugal today, and beyond, which highlights the criminal destruction and cuts in public services evident, particularly in health, whether because of the troika, the blind policies of submission to the deficit, the rescue of banks, such a path is completely unacceptable and must therefore be strongly denounced and combated.

What is required to respond to the brutal crisis that Europe is facing, and in an aggravated way by the most fragile countries, is to mobilize more funds (the richest countries must contribute more, as they are the ones who benefit from European integration), without withdrawing money from other funds, except those intended for security, militaristic, external interventionist and propaganda policies, not only being left behind by the anticipation of the funds allocated under the structural and cohesion funds, maintaining conditionalities and national co-participation and, also, make available a credit line to States with the same interest rate as the ECB loan to the banking system; end conditionalities in the use of structural and investment funds and their reallocation in support of the sectors most affected by the

fall in economic activity, in support of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the sectors most affected; revoke the Stability Pact and the Budget Treaty, as well as the constraints of economic governance; avoid increasing interest on public debt; boost cooperation between countries; promote social progress and avoid the mistakes of the past in which it imposed an infamous policy of exploitation and impoverishment.

We must be uncompromising in the full respect of the fundamental rights of workers and other sectors of the population. If we don't, democracy will be at risk. But we can also come out of the crisis in a stronger direction towards more cohesive societies, with work with rights and with economies that respond to the needs of workers and peoples. These are, among others, essential conditions for the development of our countries.

It is in this context and in these circumstances that we understand that it is necessary for EPSU to firmly denounce, condemn and fight any attempt to impose austerity policies on workers and peoples, and to intervene in order to mobilize and take the defence of rights further. public service workers, the demand for quality public services for all, employment and wages, the economic and social fabric and the construction of a genuine Europe of progress and social justice.