



European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

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Alternatives to austerity center-stage at ETUC Congress

(Athens 17 May 2011) Today the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) Congress discussed a new economic narrative for Europe. Trade union delegates urged EU institutions to go back to the heart of Europe and stop undermining trade union rights, jobs, pay and public services. The question is not whether we say yes to Europe or not, but which direction Europe should take.

“The European Commission is perverting the spirit of the Lisbon Treaty and its foundations; social protection, decent pay and public services as the concrete expression of fundamental rights. The obsession with the market is creating disaffection with Europe. As a matter of emergency we call for an end to the austerity measures, the introduction of a European tax on financial transactions and investment in public service jobs” said **Carola Fischbach-Pyttel**, General Secretary of the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU).

The European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion László Andor fell short of recognizing that public services are part of the solution to solving the crisis. The crisis was driven by excessive short term profits and inequalities, yet the EU coordinated austerity package will fuel further inequalities and xenophobia. The only positive statement by Mr. Andor is his expressed support for a European Financial Transactions Tax. EPSU will hold him to his word. This is yet again a concrete expression that the voices in favor of employment and social justice must drive the EU agenda.

A fair distribution of wealth is also central to the trade union agenda. EPSU and its affiliates call for those who have made and are making money out of the crisis to pay their share. *“A key tool this end is fair progressive taxation”*, said **Anne-Marie Perret**, EPSU President when moving a related amendment to the ETUC Congress resolution.

For more information contact, Pablo Sanchez, psanchez@epsu.org 00 32 4 74 62 66 33

EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 250 trade unions; EPSU organizes workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI).

European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)
45 Rue Royale - 1000 BRUSSELS – BELGIUM
Tel. : 32 2 250 10 80 * Fax : 32 2 250 10 99 * E-mail : epsu@epsu.org *
Website: <http://www.epsu.org>