

6 May General Strike

The CGIL has proclaimed a general strike for **6 May 2011**. The aim of the strike is once again to call for a change in economic policy. This is the only way to solve the current crisis and stop our country's decline. The government seems hell-bent on making this decline irreversible.

Berlusconi and his cohorts are incapable of responding to the country's needs. This government has impoverished Italy economically. Its policies on education and culture have brought shame on our society.

- Berlusconi's government wriggles out of its responsibilities to combat unemployment and to oppose the employers' preference for short-term contracts and casual labour. It uses immigrants as scapegoats, feeding a fear of difference. With its xenophobic and racist measures it offends people's dignity and Italy's reputation as a civil society.
- Berlusconi's government has been grossly negligent in managing the flow of immigrants from North Africa. This is proof of the total failure of its immigration policies.

The CGIL proposes a detailed set of policies to get Italy out of this crisis. Its programme covers employment and development, the return of a standard employment contract based on the rules of democracy and worker representation, and a fairer tax system. It contains measures to set the country on a path of growth, and to give confidence to young Italians and immigrants.

The programme of reforms tackles today's problems in order to build a better future. It also addresses the condition of immigrant workers, and in particular it demands:

- **a law to regularise the status of immigrants already in Italy** - in order to combat the illegal and degrading activities forced upon them. Immigration must be seen as a resource for development!
- **a reform of citizenship** - we demand not only a positive and more effective management of the flow of immigrants, but also programmes to help them settle and integrate, through a reform of citizenship. This is especially needed for children born in Italy, in order to overcome discrimination. As a start, immigrants should have the right to vote in local government elections;
- **suspension of the effects of the Bossi-Fini law when people lose their jobs because a business shuts down** - it is completely unacceptable that immigrant workers (more than 2,300,000), who have been working in Italy for years (producing about 10% of GDP), who send their children to school to build their future in this country, should lose their residence permits when they lose their jobs, becoming illegal immigrants who can be threatened and blackmailed by anyone, always risking expulsion.

The CGIL proclaims today more than ever that it is a multi-ethnic trade union confederation. It stands up for immigrants because the defence of human rights does not recognise ethnic barriers, and because **Unequal rights = Reduced rights for everyone.**

We, men and women immigrant workers, will strike en masse, and demonstrate in the streets and piazzas, aware that the defence of our rights as immigrants is possible only if we stand up for the rights of everyone.

