



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

Message of the ETUC in view of the mobilisation of the Italian trade unions on the 'DDL Sicurezza'

The European trade union movement expresses its deep concerns and opposition to the Italian Government's plans to restrict the right to peaceful protest, a pillar of any democratic society.

Article 12 of the European Union's Charter of Fundamental Rights states clearly that "everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly". The Italian Government's plans to criminalise dissent would clearly be a violation of the Charter, as well as Italy's own Constitution.

Our fundamental freedoms which are now enshrined in European and national law were won through organised dissent and protest of exactly the kind that the Italian Government is now seeking to criminalise.

The threat of imprisonment for passive resistance, for example by sitting in a road as part of a trade union demonstration, is clearly disproportionate and the kind of draconian punishment one would not expect of a democratic country.

At a time when working people are facing falling living standards and a growing jobs crisis, it is vital that their fundamental right to peaceful protest for a better life are upheld.

We note that this legislation also introduces harsher penalties, including for imprisonment of pregnant women and mothers with children under the age of one, while abolishing certain crimes for public maladministration which have been used to prevent mafia infiltration.

This bill sends the message that the Italian Government is tough on peaceful protest and soft on violent criminals.

On behalf of the European Trade Union Confederation, which represents 45 million members from 94 trade union organisations in 42 European countries, I send our full support and solidarity to the Italian trade unions and their mobilisation. Your struggle is our struggle!

Esther Lynch,
General Secretary - European Trade Union Confederation