



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

Message of ETUC General Secretary Esther Lynch in view of KESK Demonstration on 25 October 2024

Dear co-Presidents, dear General Secretary
Dear colleagues, dear friends,

On behalf of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and its 45 million members, from 94 trade union organisations in 42 European countries, I would like to express our solidarity with KESK – on the occasion of your demonstration “justice for dismissals”.

Comrades, in every country of this planet, workers and public employees should have the right to join freely a trade union, without having to fear for harassment, discrimination, dismissals or even imprisonment.

It is certain that dismissals is one of the worst forms of harassment targeting trade union leaders and members. In this respect, ETUC has been following the case of 4259 dismissed KESK members and leaders since these dismissals took place under the State of Emergency period.

The ETUC is fully aware of the problems that dismissed KESK members have been suffering for a long period. We know that 8 years passed but there are still 2512 colleagues who have yet to be reinstated.

In this respect, the ETUC stands in fully solidarity with KESK and its dismissed members.

Last year, once again, the International Labour Organization condemned Türkiye for not complying with the ILO Convention No. 98 (ratified in 1952) on the Right to organize and bargain collectively in the public sector. The Committee - I quote - *“noted with deep concern the lack of action on the part of the Government to follow up on its various observations regarding protection against anti-union discrimination. (...) Therefore, the Committee urged the Government to take appropriate measures to ensure that the provision is made in the legislation for an adequate protection against anti-union discrimination in the public sector, by providing for full compensation of the prejudice suffered in both occupational and financial terms and by providing for effective and sufficiently dissuasive sanctions.”*

Friends, the Government should adopt legislative reforms that protect and support trade unions, the right to collective bargaining and the right to organise, systems and laws in favour of workers and public employees rather than leaving them vulnerable to employers’ whims.

I know that one of your major other concerns is the shrinking purchasing power of your members: public sector wages have dramatically declined over the last months due to the still high inflation, pushing salaries to the level of the minimum wage. According to an independent research institute, the cost of living increased by 5,3% for this month of September: workers and public employees can’t make a living anymore.

Comrades, for years the ETUC has been campaigning for fair wages, the reduction of inequalities, and the fight against poverty. We demanded – and got an European Directive or Law on adequate statutory minimum wages for workers, including public employees,



and their families. Those wages, ensured by collective bargaining, should allow workers, including public employees, and their families to live in decent conditions, both economically and socially. Pay increases must at a minimum compensate for inflation.

The Government should adopt an economy that works for people and work for the planet as well.

I wish you success for your demonstration.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Esther Lynch".

Esther Lynch,
General Secretary - European Trade Union Confederation