



European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

Press communication – 10 November 2011

Public service unions in Europe coordinate action against austerity!

The Executive Committee of the European Federation of Public Services (EPSU) decided to coordinate on November 30th across Europe a day of joint action against austerity and for Social Europe. This coincides with the meeting of the Council of Finance Ministers in Brussels and with the Employment Council the day after.

Angry about the inability of European leaders to define a positive solution to the crisis and following many national actions by public sector workers, EPSU trade unions will protest together against a range of austerity measures being taken, including attacks on trade union and collective bargaining rights, cuts in staff, wages, and pensions, and reductions in public services to citizens...Workers, their families and their communities are asked to pay for a crisis that they did not cause. It is time for governments to tax speculation, the wealthy and the banks in order to address inequalities, create employment and strengthen public services.

Union mobilization will range from public sector general strikes to national days of action, mass meetings, pickets and protests outside EU permanent representation offices or other symbolic venues. It will also include press conferences and adverts in the popular press in several countries.

The impact of the crisis differs from country to country. Europe's public service unions reject the "Catastroika" approach of the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission which seeks ever deeper cuts in public spending. These policies push workers and citizens over the edge towards poverty and a gloomy future.

EPSU will also try to influence the decisions of the European Council in December. We expect that further European economic governance will have at its heart the strengthening of democracy, creation of jobs and protection of the autonomy of the social partners.

Carola Fischbach-Pyttel, EPSU General Secretary said *"there is a massive onslaught against all that working people have fought for. We cannot let bankers, speculators and free market ayatollahs take over our public services and destroy historic welfare achievements. We will intensify our efforts to fight back and to defend what is dear to people in Europe. We need to live up to the challenge."*

"If Europe's leaders do not listen to our message, we will step up our efforts for another social and democratic Europe!"

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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 275 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).