

## **CGTP-IN Message of Solidarity to the National Strike in Belgium**

**15 December 2014**

Dear Colleagues of FGTB, CSC and CGSLB,

On behalf of CGTP-IN and of the Portuguese workers we represent, we extend our fraternal solidarity to the national strike your trade union centres are organising against the Belgian government proposals which, as you mention, will only create more injustice, unbalance and inequity.

You are rightly exposing the anti-social attempts to bring up retirement age to 67 years, strong rise of the prices of different public services like, bus, train, postal service, schools, diesel, violent cuts in health care and other social expenditure, plus serious cuts in the state funding of crucial public services. You also rightly criticise the 2% tax rise, which will mostly affect the ordinary people.

In fact, in the majority of the EU countries, workers and peoples are being confronted with a very serious anti-labour and anti-social offensive. In the context of a very deep crisis of capitalism, and using the pretext of overcoming that crisis, big capital and governments are attempting to destroy historic economic, social and labour gains and rights, with the “European Social Model” under very severe attack.

This situation is leading to very rapid increase in inequalities. The main cause is the domination of pro-capital governments by big financial and speculative capital. This has systematically and abusively favoured big capital to the detriment of the workers and poorer layers of the society. In our countries, day after day, we see thousands and thousands of men and women workers becoming redundant, having precarious work and living in social exclusion and poverty.

In fact, in many EU member states, unemployment and precariousness have reached unbearable levels. Salaries and pensions are losing purchasing power, social and labour rights are weakened or mutilated, retirement schemes are undermined, fiscal injustice is increasing and there is a strong wave of privatisations and attack against the public services.

And all of this is being done in the name of the so-called austerity policies, and of cutting the deficit and public debt, supposedly to overcome the “crisis”.

Dear Comrades of FGTB, CSC and CGSLB,

We only have to look at the measures imposed in a large number of EU countries, being particularly violent in countries where IMF, ECB and EU “troikas” have been imposing “bail-out programmes”, which are in fact aggression tools on national sovereignty. This is confirmed by the critical developments in Greece, Portugal, Cyprus and Ireland, and with different but also worrying expressions in countries like Italy and Spain, and now also in Belgium.

For all these reasons, all across Europe, workers and trade unions must step up their struggles and fight for a clear rupture with these neoliberal policies and with the current EU model. We need to build a different Europe, a Europe of workers and peoples, with social dimension, solidarity and cooperation, with respect for member states’ sovereignties and specific interests and needs. We need a Europe with respect for social and labour rights, a Europe of sustainable economic growth, which induces quality jobs, jobs with rights.

As trade unions we must resist and organise the struggle. At our national level, but also across Europe, a struggle that requires clear and firm stands from our national centres but also from the ETUC in which we affiliate and cooperate.

In Portugal, our struggle is common to yours. We are fighting against the harsh austerity measures and we are organising many strikes, rallies,

demonstrations and diverse protest actions for the resignation of the right wing government and the calling of an early election that may create the conditions for a different path for Portugal, for an alternative that puts an end to exploitation and secures a future of economic and social progress.

Dear Colleagues,

We are certain of the determination of your trade union centres in defending the rights and interests of the Belgian workers and people. We can only wish that your 15 December national strike will be massive and that it may attain all your objectives.

With our fraternal solidarity and friendship

Best Regards

Augusto Praça

CGTP-IN Executive Board

Lisbon, 11 December 2014