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Datum: 04/04/2008 07:18 AM

Onderwerp: European trade unionists demonstrate in Ljubljana in pursuit of higher pay

Ljubljana, 04/04/2008



Tomorrow afternoon, in Ljubljana, Slovenia, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is assembling thousands of trade unionists from all over Europe to press their demand for better pay and purchasing power, and a fairer share of profits. All the ETUC's national affiliates will send representatives.

This Euro-demonstration is part of the ETUC's ongoing campaign for more equal pay, agreed last year at its Seville Congress, and coincides with the informal ECOFIN Council meeting of finance ministers in Slovenia. The ETUC demands equality of treatment for all workers, including migrants, young people, women and men.

The message coming from workers across Europe is that they have had enough of shrinking purchasing power and excessive wage moderation, making it more and more difficult for them to maintain decent living standards for themselves and their families. Trade unions must have the freedom to undertake collective wage bargaining without the interference of governments, finance ministers or the European Central Bank, insists the ETUC.

"This is a campaign launched in some anger and with real commitment," says ETUC General Secretary John Monks. "Getting a fairer deal for workers across Europe is a top ETUC priority." Since 1995, while wages have fallen as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) across the EU, profits have risen. Top managers earn up to 300 times more than their workers, leaving more than 30 million people on poverty wages, while an average 15% wage gap separates men and women.

Evidence shows that wage moderation does not create more jobs, as some claim, but leads instead to stagnating domestic demand and weakened employment rates. European trade unions are demanding:

a rise in real salaries and purchasing power, to boost demand and foster more and better jobs;

decent minimum wages to combat poverty;

equal pay for men and women;

stronger collective bargaining, also at European level, to end social dumping;

fair wages for public sector, temporary, and mobile workers;

wider opportunities for lifelong learning;

a limit to the income of top earners.

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