

ETUC Press release

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**ETUC GENERAL SECRETARY URGENTLY
MEETS WITH GSEE PRESIDENT
PANAGOPOULOS**

14 February 2012



**European Trade Union Confederation [ETUC]
Confédération européenne des syndicats [CES]**

In the light of the recent critical developments the General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Bernadette Ségal, visited Greece, meeting urgently with GSEE President Yannis Panagopoulos who gave an update on the new austerity package imposed on Greece under relentless pressure and intimidation by the Troika.

Mr Panagopoulos briefed the ETUC General Secretary about recent action by the GSEE at the European and the international level including recourse to the ILO (International Labor Organisation) and to the European Parliament (EP). The GSEE has written to EP President Martin Schultz urging action against measures that breach fundamental principles enshrined in the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The ETUC General Secretary deplored the new unacceptable package that, with total disdain to its disastrous economic and social impact so far, dismantles labour institutions and uproots the entire collective bargaining framework depriving workers of minimum protections as it slashes the minimum wage by 22 percent (by 32% for new/young workers), diminishes state and supplementary pensions and imposes thousands of public sector layoffs as well as the sell-off of state assets - driving the economy into deeper recession and severely testing social cohesion. General Secretary Ségal said that the plan offers no perspective towards recovery nor appropriation of their future by the Greek people. She also expressed grave concern at the blatant disregard of the agreement to preserve core labour institutions reached by the social partners who have jointly concluded that wage squeezes and labour market deregulation will not boost competitiveness.

Noting that the economically unviable and socially unsustainable conditions imposed on Greece also raise serious issues as regards the respect fundamental EU principles and values, the General Secretary pledged unequivocal solidarity by the ETUC to the GSEE in all its actions to defend workers rights and income against the devastation being imposed on Greek families and pledged the ETUC's support for the GSEE's European Parliament initiative.

The ETUC exists to speak with a single voice, on behalf of the common interests of workers, at European level. Founded in 1973, it now represents 84 trade union organisations in 36 European countries, plus 12 industry-based federations.

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