

ETUC condemns Nationalistic Turn Hungary (11.1.12)

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is seriously concerned at the nationalistic, authoritarian turn being taken by the government in Hungary. Citizens are now subject to a Constitution which stifles freedom and daily erodes their public and private liberties. Media pluralism and the independence of the justice system are under threat.

The Hungarian government's measures, voted in in record time, follow the reform of the Labour Code which harms workers' rights, particularly those of the most vulnerable workers.

Viktor Orban's government preaches economic patriotism, which is no more than a illusion, because the country is mired in crisis. The currency is depreciating, capital is flooding out, there is an explosion of debt and Hungary continues to depend on the European Union (EU) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for its survival. The ETUC stands shoulder to shoulder with the Hungarians who came out in their thousands in early January to protest against this government.

Bernadette Ségol, ETUC General Secretary, stated: 'The European Union cannot put up with the attacks made by Viktor Orban on media pluralism, the independence of the justice system and all the democratic counter-powers. We need to act to ensure that the fundamental rights guaranteed by the EU are fully respected. The initiatives taken by President Barroso must be bolstered. This so-called economic patriotism will only lead to forcing the country into a nationalistic and populist direction that must be condemned as being harmful to workers and citizens'.

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.
