

## **DECLARATION BY THE EI/ETUCE BUREAU: 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2010**

### **Protests by the Greek Unions**

The EI/ETUCE Bureau, meeting in Brussels on 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2010, declares its support for the Greek teaching unions, OLME and DOE, in their efforts to protect the salaries and pensions of their members and to maintain their standards of living.

The Bureau expresses its grave concern for the welfare of the teachers and other education workers in Greece whose standard of living and life expectations are affected adversely by the harsh economic restrictions placed on Greece by the international monetary lending institutions.

The Bureau condemns in the strongest possible terms those in the banking and financial sectors who were responsible for the economic crisis and those in the previous Greek governments who mismanaged the Greek economy and thereby exacerbated the effects of the economic crisis on the Greek people.

The Bureau recognises that, in many countries in Europe, teachers and other public sector workers, are bearing the brunt of cuts in public spending through reductions in their salaries, pensions and other conditions of employment. Cuts in spending on public education services also impact adversely on teachers and education workers, resulting in larger classes, teacher shortages, lack of equipment and basic facilities.

The Bureau declares that teachers and their families and other public sector workers and their families in Greece, who bear no responsibility for the crisis, should be protected by the Greek Government from its effects and not made to pay for the crisis.

The Bureau demands that measures taken to address the effects of the crisis in Greece which impact on teachers and other public sector workers should be negotiated and accepted by the social partners and that, any such measures should have a fair balance in their impact across Greek society. Those who have benefited most from the generation of wealth in Greece in the past should pay most. Those who have not contributed appropriately to the public exchequer should now be required to pay their dues.

The Bureau emphasises that cuts in the salaries and pensions of public sector workers will not solve the economic crisis in Greece or in any other country in Europe and that only a balanced set of measures which have the broad support of society will succeed in re-establishing stable economic growth.

The Bureau expresses its support and solidarity with all of its colleagues in Greece in their struggle for a fair solution to the country's economic problems and calls on other member organisations in countries which are not affected as adversely by the economic crisis to offer support to their Greek colleagues.

The **Bureau decided** that representations should be made by EI and ETUCE to the European Union and the global financial institutions to the effect that teachers and other public service workers should be insulated against the harsh impact of economic austerity measures which are imposed on European countries as part of economic rescue packages.

The **Bureau also supports** the European Trade Union Confederation's (ETUC) call for European policy makers to stop the speculators from destroying the European social model and to break with the type of 'barbaric structural adjustment' imposed on Greece. It also supports the ETUC call on European policy makers to:

- enlarge and increase substantially the "Commission's balance of payments fund" so that it is covering all EU member states;
- review the conditionalities attached to the Greek and other loans so that they are no longer abused to push through a model of deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation but respect instead the principles of the European Social model;
- mobilise the central banks in Europe as a 'buyer of last resort' to fight against the speculators, in exactly the same way as they have taken hundreds of billions of low-rated private debt from the banks onto their own balance sheets;
- suspend the use of rating agencies' sovereign debt ratings by monetary and financial policy organisations and look seriously into the creation of a European rating agency; and,
- set in motion a strengthened European Recovery Initiative, with European funds, including a common bond which would be used to invest in major infrastructural and network programmes, thus pulling countries like Greece out of the trap of recession and depression.

**Brussels: 5<sup>th</sup> May, 2010.**

**Ronnie Smith, President, Pan-European Structure**

**Martin Romer, General Secretary, ETUCE**

**Charlie Lennon, Deputy General Secretary, Education International**