



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

Message of ETUC General Secretary Esther Lynch in view of KESK Demonstration on 30 November 2024

Dear co-Presidents, Dear General Secretary,
Dear Comrades, Friends,

On behalf of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and its 45 million members, from 94 trade union organisations in 42 European countries, I would like to express our solidarity with KESK on the occasion of your demonstration for tax justice and fair wages.

Comrades, **inequalities** are worsening in the world: wage shares and real wages are decreasing, while profits and profit margins are increasing and do not translate into higher private investments, much needed in the light of the digital and green transitions. In the OECD, 63% of the new wealth created between 2020 and 2021 globally went to the richest 1%.

We need therefore **strong regulations** and **taxation policies with greater progressivity**. The taxation system should better target wealth accumulation and capital gains in order to ensure a fairer income and wealth distributions. I am fully aware of KESK's demand for tax justice. As you know well, the ETUC also advocates to put an end to tax havens and tax avoidance and evasion, including by strongly prosecuting such practices, but also by implementing measures such as preventing access to public tendering and support (such as subsidies) for those companies that have engaged in tax avoidance or evasion.

The ETUC fully agrees that adequate financing is a prerequisite to ensure high-quality public services for all namely public employees and those who receive these services. This is a key component for inclusive society since adequate investments in public services ensure everyone (including women, refugees and migrants etc.) that they will be treated equally.

Friends, for years, the ETUC has been campaigning for **fair wages**, for the reduction of inequalities and against poverty. Our affiliates including KESK have similar campaigns. We demand adequate statutory minimum wages for workers, public employees and their families. Those wages, underpinned by strong collective bargaining, should allow workers, public employees and their families to live in decent conditions, both economically and socially. And their increases must at a minimum compensate for inflation, which should, in Türkiye, reach 62,90% on average in 2024.

Comrades, in the latest 2024 edition of **the ITUC GLOBAL RIGHTS INDEX**, **Türkiye has – again – the sad privilege to be part of the 10 worst countries in the world for working people.**

In 2024, workers' freedoms and rights continued to be relentlessly attacked, with police cracking down on protests, and trade union leaders – some of you - arbitrarily arrested. In addition, employers continued to engage in systematic union busting by methodically dismissing workers who tried to organise. We are particularly concerned that the government of Turkey is not complying with the requirement for inclusivity and transparency in **ILO Conventions 87 and 98** on the right to organise and collective bargaining in the public sector. Indeed, restrictions on the right to strike in the sector



should be limited to public servants who exercise authority in the name of the state and those working in 'essential services' in the strict sense of the term.

Türkiye should have in place systems and laws that support trade unions, the right to collective bargaining and the right to organise. The EU Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages, adopted in October 2022, set a target of 80% collective bargaining coverage. But in Turkey, this percentage is below 15%.

Dear co-Presidents, dear friends, you know that the ETUC was, is, and will be on your side protesting against those violations of the workers' rights. Together, we have to put pressure on the government in order to get it complying with international standards.

The ETUC calls on the Government of Türkiye to pay attention to KESK's demands for a better society.

I wish you success for your demonstration.

In solidarity,

Esther Lynch,
General Secretary - European Trade Union Confederation