

Conclusions of LOC/MTC`s National Team Meeting, the 22nd and 23rd of September, Aveiro

The latest decisions taken by the national government concerning State Budget for 2013, including the averted attempt to reduce the salaries by transference to workers of part of the entrepreneurs obligations related to the Single Social Rate payment, show the government`s obsessive fundamentalism to follow a policy path that is leading to social disaster, to economic collapse, to the undervaluation of the democratic system and to neglecting the Christian`s roots of our society.

This is one of the conclusions of LOC/MTC`s National Team, gathered in Aveiro, the 22nd and 23rd of September. Wherefore, we decide to add our voice to the voice of many other citizens and civil and religious organizations, which have expressed with civic responsibility their indignation, considering the present political moment and our government`s decisions.

LOC/MTC continues to raise his voice against the devastating effect of work and salary devaluation on downgrading workers dignity, with serious consequences to their families.

Today, people live with more distress and suffering, caused by the lack of labour rights that during some decades have boosted decent work and fair wages, reached by long and hard social dialog.

Our belief is that these are essential means to an inclusive development, allowing for an equitable prosperity and inducing positive effects on the sustainability of natural resources.

There are increasingly precarious and frail work conditions that lead to many workers to see their job - with the honorable exceptions of some firms that are managed with social responsibility – as suffering, because authoritarianism and profit goals only generates fear and insecurity, which affects their confidence in the future.

Structural unemployment, a tragic reality resulting from this crisis, is deeply affecting life of unemployed persons and their families. This turns visible in terms of increased family conflicts, on domestic violence and suicides, and in debt and loss of goods that are collected by banks or tax services.

In a time where workers and their families need larger support and social protection, the government hampers the access to this support, shamefully reduces unemployment allowances, cuts social subventions and increases the bureaucracy of other financial support, which only stigmatizes those who need to use them. Only the poor have to prove publicly his poverty and his honesty. Therefore, it is urgent to change the paradigm of economic and social governance. Working with rights must be recognized as the main generator of wealth, restoring dignity to workers through their salary and giving them time for training and family.

Taxes over companies, banks, shareholders, rewards or financial values of stock exchange speculation should be applied with accuracy and clear rules. It will also be necessary to stop the gains and comfortable states allocated to all those who have exercised public and private roles. It is a moral issue.

Fortunately, citizens are taking awareness and expressing themselves. The beaker of patience with these experimentalist policies of austerity has overflowed. It is not acceptable that we continue seeking to implement economic measures apart from the real economy, where the main aim is to reach profit disproportional in relation to workers income, where an uncontrolled financial speculation remains, where corruption goes on, and where the shadow economy grows steadily.

If we must respect the memorandum commitment signed with the Troika, we cannot forget also the respect due to a fundamental pillar of democracy and of the Portuguese Constitution: the right of all citizens to work and to decent life, with access to health care, education and housing.

Still, we want to proclaim good news, to revive the sense of Common Good and Solidarity, thus going beyond first aid, not always promoting freedom. As Christian workers we feel challenged to get near other organizations so that, together, we can strengthen inalienable principles of the human person.

Therefore, once again, we call workers and citizens to participate in all initiatives that will take place in the next times, defending democracy, social justice, new ways of governance, employment and a greater openness of parties to the public debate.

We thus recognize the Democratic Congress of the Alternatives, promoted by the civil society, the demonstration against unemployment promoted by CGTP, between the 5th and the 13rd October, and all other civic statements helping to think a future marked by a more humanizing culture.

We believe also that it is required a cultural renewal of the economic-financial systems in Portugal, Europe and the world, where, among other issues, "people own profits and profits made by firms and groups must be used for society common good", as it is mentioned on the last note of the Permanent Council of the Bishops Conference.

Aveiro, 23rd September 2012

LOC/MTC`s National Team