



PRESS RELEASE



ETF AND IDC UNIONS RENEW SOLIDARITY TO DISPUTES INVOLVING DOCKWORKERS ACROSS EUROPE

Yesterday, 5 March 2014, 20 dockworkers' unions from 16 countries affiliated to the ETF (European Transport Workers' Federation) and the IDC (International Dockworkers' Council) have met in Lisbon to renew their support to the Portuguese union SETC and its members, which have been involved in a tough dispute over the past two years. The Portuguese case is exemplary for the challenges faced by dockworkers all over Europe, since European legislation, infringement mechanisms and austerity plans imposed by international financial institutions are being used to try to undermine national laws and dockers' conditions in other European countries as well.

Following long-lasting industrial actions in Lisbon and in other Portuguese ports and huge political and industrial support by dockers' unions from all around Europe, the dispute was finally settled through an agreement signed with the Portuguese employers last 14 February. The social partners have to enter now into negotiations over the renewal of the collective agreement.

"The labour situation in the majority of Portuguese ports continues to be defined by low wages and high precarity, Antonio Mariano, leader of SETC said. This leads to extreme situations where the pools of professional dockworkers face the prospect of collective dismissals, due to the deliberate violation of International Conventions which Portugal has ratified. We ask that real negotiations take place in all Portuguese ports, to guarantee that the same solutions found for Lisbon apply, so as to firmly reject future initiatives to liberalise the ports".

IDC coordinator for the European zone, **Anthony Tetard** declared 'We are here to show that we remain vigilant and keep monitoring the situation in Portugal. Employers have committed to engage in negotiations. Following the extraordinary expression of solidarity shown over the past months, all European dockworkers' unions urge that the negotiations be meaningful and are ready to continue demonstrating their solidarity should our Portuguese comrades require so'.

During the meeting delegates also discussed the disputes that are currently involving dockworkers in Europe, particularly in Norway, Spain, Greece and Denmark as well in other countries where conflicts are foreseeable over the next months. Delegates also unanimously condemned the unacceptable violation of labour rights that dockworkers are facing in Honduras.

'International solidarity has proved to be a powerful instrument for winning our battles' said ETF Dockers' Chair, Terje Samuelsen. 'Over the past years European dockers have mutually supported each other. We have resisted two attempts to disrupt our social and working conditions that came from the European level, and we are demonstrating to be united also when challenges come at national level. Solidarity is not bounded by geographical or linguistic borders, we will keep supporting each other to ensure that our working and social conditions are not jeopardised as a consequence of ultraliberal measures that only benefit certain operators and ship-owners''

Declarations on the situation in Greece, Norway, Denmark and Honduras were adopted during the Conference.

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