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European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

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TO: ETUCE Member organisations in the UK: ATL, EIS, INTO, NASUWT, UCU, NUT-, SSTA

Brussels, 29th of November 2011

Ref.: MR/9362

Subject: solidarity with the ETUCE member organisations in the UK

Dear colleagues,

The ETUCE wishes to express its full solidarity with its member organisations in the UK for their participation in the strike of public sector workers to safeguard their right to a decent pension.

The teachers in the UK will be joining a strike movement covering the whole public sector on Wednesday the 30th of November to protest against pension changes pushed by the Coalition government, which would make public employees work longer for a poorer pension and pay more contributions. All the unions have voted for the strike by a clear majority, thus demonstrating that the government's project is widely condemned across the public service. Recognising the unfairness of this plan, a majority of people in the UK supports the strike, as has been recently demonstrated by several opinion polls.

The time has come for the public authorities in Europe to understand that trying to make the employees pay the bill for the greedy behaviour of those who have led the economy into this crisis is both immoral and inefficient. It is an insult to those who work hard to make ends meet to urge them to make ever greater sacrifices. It is furthermore an economic nonsense in the current situation to undermine the purchasing power of a majority of people and to jeopardize and weaken essential services such as education, healthcare and other public services.

When faced with an absence of political courage, vision and will for dialogue, the only option for the trade union movement is to undertake industrial action. The ETUCE hopes that the upcoming general strike in the UK public services will be part of a successful resistance to irresponsible policies all over Europe.

Kind regards,

Martin Rømer
European Director