

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC Backs UN Migrant Call

Brussels, 7 September 2015 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has backed a UN call for Europe to accept, initially, up to 200,000 migrants and for European countries to work together to handle the massive inflow of people from the Middle East and Mediterranean. UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres has called for a common strategy, based on responsibility, solidarity and trust.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said, "This is not only a crisis for Europe; it is a global crisis. With some two million refugees already in Turkey, the world is faced with the biggest migration movement in 70 years, as people flee armed conflict and abject poverty. Until the basic reasons that people are forced to flee their homelands are resolved, the migratory pressure will continue to grow. Ordinary people, as individuals and through their unions, community and faith groups and sports clubs are showing the way to politicians – solidarity and compassion must be the guiding principles in this as in any other humanitarian crisis."

Speaking for the European Trade Union Confederation, the ETUC, General Secretary Bernadette Ségal said, "Europe must share the burden equitably, and recognise that simply closing borders is not only wrong, but will not stem the flow. Ultimately, the answers lie beyond Europe's borders, and we call on European leaders, and the international community, to work together to tackle the root causes of this unprecedented flow of people."

"It is encouraging that several European countries are showing their preparedness to accept substantial numbers of people fleeing persecution and war. Others need to follow their example, and ensure that the new arrivals are able to integrate fully in their new countries, including with the right to decent jobs," Burrow said. "The failure of the Gulf States, which are the world's richest and are deeply engaged in conflicts in the Middle East, to accept a fair share of refugees, is simply deplorable."

The ITUC is calling for the G20 leaders to take responsibility for global solutions at their November Summit. "Equally, global leaders need to work together to end the conflicts, particularly in Iraq and Syria, which are driving the migration crisis," added Burrow.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 328 national affiliates.

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