

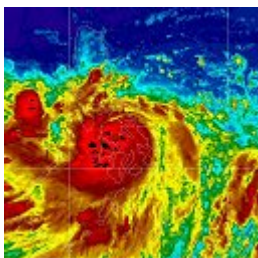
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Turkey: More than 7,000 signatures calling for Meryem Özsögüt's release

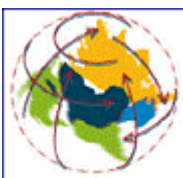


On Sunday 13 July, PSI appealed to the EU leaders gathered in Paris discussing the Mediterranean Union to urge the Turkish government to release Meryem Özsögüt. Two days previously, PSI handed a total of almost 7,000 messages of support from around the World to EU parliamentarian Joost Lagendijk, chairman of the Turkey delegation of the European Parliament. Peter Waldorff, general secretary of PSI, welcomes Lagendijk's actions to raise the unacceptable detention of Ms Özsögüt within the EU and with the EU presidency currently held by France. Ms Özsögüt was arrested in January 2008 and PSI believes that her arrest was motivated solely by her activities as a trade union leader. Read more [here](#).

Philippines typhoon victims receive help from PSI Centennial Fund



Typhoon Frank (official name Fengshen) hit the Philippines on 21 June and left a trail of death and destruction. The typhoon affected 4,195,665 people in 5,855 villages spread over a vast area. Over half of those affected, some 2,462,310 people, were displaced. The death toll reached 557, while there were 826 injured, and 26 still missing. Some 92,129 houses were destroyed while 322,010 others were damaged. Many members of PSI affiliates were affected by the typhoon, and PSI made a donation of 10,000€ from the PSI Centennial Fund and the Asia-Pacific Fund. The money will be used to bring aid and assistance to unionists and their families.



Global Labour University - call for papers

Since its inception in 2004, the Global Labour University (www.global-labour-university.org) has welcomed trade unions in its Masters Programme in labour studies. The university is also a network of trade unions and universities aiming to facilitate research and spark debate. At its annual conference in 2009, trade unionists and scholars are invited to present papers and discuss the responses of labour to the challenge of financialisation and how financial markets increase the rates of return on their investments. Studies should respond to:

- The impact of global capital mobility on wages, working conditions and trade unions
- Extending rights and collective bargaining to workers in precarious and informal employment

The deadline for receipt of proposals for papers to be send in electronic format is **1 November 2008**. For full details, see <http://www.global-labour-university.org>

The **inscription deadline** for the Global Labour University programmes in Brazil and South Africa is **1st September 2008**. For more information, go to <http://www.global-labour-university.org>.

UK: Passport workers strike over pay



23 July - Almost 3,00 members of PSI affiliate the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) have gone on strike at seven of Britain's regional passport offices in a protest over pay and cutbacks. The protest is over a dispute with a 2.5% pay deal, which has not been awarded to all staff. The seven regional passport offices affected by the strike are London, Liverpool, Belfast, Glasgow, Peterborough, Newport and Durham. It will also affect 68 interview offices.

The longest-serving employees have not received a pay rise for the fifth year running. Staff are also angry at the government's passport office closure programme. Plans have already been drawn up to close the Glasgow passport office which could see over 100 jobs go. PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said: "The closure of the Glasgow passport office and the threat to a further unnamed three is fuelling the anger over the government's policy of below inflation pay.

"It is disgraceful that long-serving passport staff should receive no pay rise for the fifth year in a row and that efficient hardworking staff should be rewarded with a pay cut in real terms."

More information on the PCS website: www.pcs.org.uk.



Sign on to the statement regarding services negotiations in the WTO

The Our World is Not For Sale (OWINFS) network delegation that has been working from Geneva to cover the WTO negotiations has reacted to the latest developments at the WTO regarding services negotiations: these include pressuring countries to make commitments under the GATS that will cement in, for ever, their current market access provisions for foreign service providers, even if countries are not sure that they want to keep them at this level as circumstances change. They are concerned that the four countries which are strongly resisting the push for a deal in services (Venezuela, Bolivia, Cuba and Nicaragua) are being isolated and pressure is being brought to bear on them to agree to a deal: if these countries block a deal, they will be accused of bringing the current Round to a halt and may be subject to retaliation by the more powerful WTO parties, such as the US and the EU. The services chair is attempting to push through a very partial/biased report as a consensus text despite members' vocal opposition. [Click here](#) to read the OWINFS statement. PSI has signed on to the statement, and you are invited to sign on too. Please send endorsements to David Robinson at robinson@caut.ca.

Korean health workers plan one-day strike

One of PSI's Korean affiliates, the Korea Health and Medical Workers' Union (KHMWU), has made a call for a strike on 23 July. The union is protesting against the commercialisation of medical facilities and the use of American beef in patients' meals, while calling for a 10.2 percent pay raise and the hiring of more personnel. It is also calling for the government to scrap plans to privatise the medical insurance system, improved staffing and better wages and working conditions.

Union leaders said they would launch a sit-in late on Tuesday at 20 general hospitals nationwide to press their demands. About 37,450 unionized medical workers will stop working at 118 hospitals unless an agreement is reached before the deadline. The union said 73 per cent of respondents had voted for the walkout in a 16-18 June ballot.

The government has designated many workplaces as strike-prohibited areas in which workers are banned from holding strikes and from any collective action. The unionists claim that management is trying to manipulate paperwork to designate hospitals as such places.

"We are also worried about the government's plan to turn hospitals into profit-making entities. Then the quality of services will go down, but we will still be laid off to make more profits," a union spokesperson claimed.

Swedish bus drivers' strike victory



A long-running dispute amongst Sweden's bus drivers turned into a national strike on 18 July after unions and employers failed to negotiate a settlement on pay, working hours and conditions. However, the drivers' union, Kommunal, finally reached an agreement with the bus company, Bussarbetsgivarna. Kommunal won an agreement that brings the working conditions for members employed by private bus companies in line with those employed by the municipality. The agreement offers improvements in working

hours, daily rest periods and a salary increase of between 2080 and 2380 Swedish kroner, spread over three years.

University of California service workers strike to end poverty wages



Mid-July, service workers at the University of California's 10 campuses and five hospitals entered into a five-day strike over wages. The workers, who are members of PSI affiliate the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, are paid 25% less than employees with comparable jobs at community colleges and private hospitals.

Campus shuttles were stopped, and cafeteria hours were reduced, but patient care was not affected at any of the medical centres. The strikers include custodians, groundskeepers, bus drivers, cooks and parking attendants. Some patient care staff went off the job in sympathy.

AFSCME has been negotiating a new contract with the University since last year without success. The workers are seeking a pay increase to \$15 an hour. Up to 96 percent of the members are eligible for at least one government welfare program because of their low wages. University officials offered to increase wages to between \$11.50 and \$12 an hour, an offer that the workers have

understandably rejected. For more information, see <http://blog.aflcio.org/2008/07/14/university-of-california-service-workers-strike-to-end-poverty-wages/>

UK: UNISON members strike for fair pay



UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis joins members at Westminster to demonstrate just how poorly the pay offer stacks up against inflation

Hundreds of thousands of local government workers in the UK have started a two-day strike for fair pay, in protest at a 2.45% pay offer. UNISON members say they have no choice but to strike – with the cost of living spiralling out of control, they cannot afford to accept a pay cut.

They are out in force at picket lines, rallies and marches across England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Members in Scotland are being balloted on whether to take action over a similar below-inflation pay offer.

Many of the strike workers are among the lowest-paid workers in the UK, earning less than £6.50 an hour (8€ or 13\$).

Two-thirds of them are women, and all of them have

told their union they are struggling to make ends meet.

These workers provide valuable frontline public services, doing vital jobs in local communities. They clean streets and schools, conduct marriages and civil partnerships, care for parks, check the safety of food, look after children and frail elderly people, and much more. But they are not well rewarded, and food, fuel and energy prices in the UK are, as elsewhere, becoming less and less affordable.

Though these 600,000 UNISON members can ill afford to lose two days' pay, they are taking action on 16 and 17 July to send a clear message to the employers that enough is enough: it's time for a fair deal.

For more information: <http://www.unison.org.uk/paymatters/index.asp>

Indian electricity workers protest



On 1 July, PSI affiliate the Delhi State Electricity Workers Union organised a day of action when 10,000 women and men formed a rally and a peace march to submit a memorandum to the Governor of New Delhi State. The issue at stake was the respect of a tripartite agreement after the privatization of Delhi Electricity Supply in 2000. The management (IPGCL and Delhi Transco Ltd) have deliberately ignored the agreement and have never responded to the union nor invited them for discussions. The union is also demanding the reinstatement of five IPGCL employees whose employment was terminated early

April. The reason for their dismissal is that they "shouted slogans" criticizing the management.

The dismissed employees are Mr. Ramakant Sharma, Mr. Amarjeet, Mr. Krishan Chakravarti, Mr. N.C.Joshi and Mr. Sameer Chatterjee.

The union is covering these workers' expenses from its own funds, and will continue the campaign until management invites them for discussions, reinstates the sacked employees and restores the functions of the tripartite agreement.

PSI has written a letter to the Lt. Governor of New Delhi, Chief Minister and Power Minister urging the management to reinstate the employees and to respect the tripartite agreement. PSI affiliates are invited to send similar letters. For more information, contact rights@world-psi.org.

Seminar on labour standards in IFI projects



The ITUC Africa office, Global Unions Office in Washington and FES Benin organised a training session on labour standards in projects financed by the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) on 23-24 June, in Togo.

Participants came from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, DR Congo, Niger, Senegal and Togo. PSI participated in the training with Teko Kpodar, Regional Secretary for Africa and Arab countries, and Mathieu Agonglovi, General Secretary of FENASSEP, Togo.

Peter Bakvis, Director of the GUF office Washington, presented information on core labour standards in projects financed by the World Bank and IFC in Francophone Africa. The participants learned about the need of labour standards in World Bank loans, union strategies, and the structure of international finance institutions. They worked in groups to prepare and present surveillance strategies and check-ups on the respect of labour standards.

Participants also found out how to work in collaboration with the GUF Washington office and ITUC Africa in order to give better support to workers affected by World Bank and IFC projects in Africa.



World Bank urges Eastern European countries to take in immigrants

The World Bank has proposed that in order to avoid labour shortages, Eastern European countries must open up to higher levels of immigration in order to compensate for the loss of many workers to Western European countries. The report acknowledges that low wages and benefits in some countries in the region are an obstacle to convincing migrant workers to return home, but not that low-wage policies promoted in the region by the IMF and World Bank were a major factor leading to many mostly younger workers leaving their countries. Bulgaria, for example, where the IFIs constantly lobbied against minimum wage increases and which has the lowest wages among EU countries, lost 11½% of its total population between 1990 and 2006, falling from 8.7 to 7.7 million inhabitants. The recommendation to increase Eastern European immigration is included in a 160-page WB report called "Innovation, Inclusion and Integration: From Transition to Convergence in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union":

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ECAEXT/Resources/258598-1214317074726/Innovation Inclusion Integration Full Report.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/ECAEXT/Resources/258598-1214317074726/Innovation+Inclusion+Integration+Full+Report.pdf)



12 August is United Nations International Youth Day (IYD). The theme for IYD 2008 is "Youth and Climate Change: Time for Action". International Youth Day gives the world an opportunity to recognize the potential of youth, to celebrate their achievements, and plan for ways to better engage young people to successfully take action in the development of their societies. It presents a unique opportunity for all stakeholders to rally together to ensure that young people are included in decision-making at all levels.

Young people are increasingly adding their voice to the call for action on climate change. Now is the time to actively engage youth in areas of preparedness, risk reduction, adaptation and mitigation. PSI also invites its affiliates to address the issue of recruitment and retention of young workers, and calls on young workers themselves to be active in trade unions. PSI is working with young workers at a regional, sub-regional and national levels to find innovative ways for

them to participate in trade union activities

Look out for PSI's declaration for International Youth Day that will shortly be available on the PSI website. Further information is available on the UN Youth website:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/iyd2008.htm>

Young workers meet in Antigua



The young workers from the Inter-American region met in Antigua, West Indies on 9-11 July. The enthusiastic group debated a number of issues such as:

- the best types of structure to bring more visibility to young workers in the region and how these workers could participate more fully in PSI events
- cases of precarious work in the public sector in participants' countries and sub-regions
- minimum standards that would ensure decent work for young employees in

the public sector and regional young workers' activities to support the World Day for Decent Work. This includes identifying material and educational resources on decent work in the public services that are especially suitable for young workers.

- successful strategies for recruiting and retaining young workers and the challenges those strategies may face.
 - how to improve communication and cooperation with other regional and global trade union organisations.
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European Social Forum



The next European Social Forum will be held in Malmö, Sweden, 17-21 September. More than 20,000 people are expected to participate in the forum, which is a meeting place for social movements in Europe. During five days seminars and workshops will be mixed with culture, music, activism and demonstrations. For information about the Forum, including how to apply for a stall, book accommodation and other practical arrangements, see www.esf2008.org.

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