

Joint statement by ETUC and Argentinian trade unions

As the trade union movements of Europe and Argentina, we are united in our drive to protect workers' right to live in dignity. We share our determination to strengthen the individual and collective freedoms of working people to have a say over the decisions that shape their lives, the right to decent working conditions, the right to a livelihood, the right to reconcile work, family and social life and the right to fair remuneration both at work and in retirement.

In both regions as in the rest of the world, these freedoms are under threat. Corporate and political interests are attempting to push back against the advances of workers and their trade unions. Far-right groups are capitalising on economic dissatisfaction and social unrest to impose their undemocratic policies, which consolidate exclusion and misery, with promises of undetermined prodigal futures.

Same enemies, same solution from the trade union movement: solidarity

Trade unions and the far-right are opposites. The far-right seeks to divide and conquer, unions fight to unite working people in their diversity. Recent experiences in Argentina as in Europe show that whenever the far-right gets to power, they seek to silence us, to contain our action, to repress and shut us down.

The experience of an extreme right in Argentina is a prime example that seeks to subject all workers' demands to fiscal and monetary austerity policies with the sole purpose of giving signals to the financial markets, with catastrophic consequences in the real economy.

Trade unions, above all else, believe in solidarity: we seek better lives, social justice and opportunity, for all working people. We stand for unity over division. They want us to feel isolated and demobilised, but everywhere we look, we see working people rising in discontent and fighting for their rights. We will continue to work together and take inspiration from our history and common cause.

The root problem: austerity and policies of fiscal adjustment

The parallelism between both continents is undeniable. The growth of far-right and extreme right takes place in a political-economic context where occupational and economic security and income are being dismantled.

In Argentina, the largest ever IMF loan that the centre-right Macri government took tied the country to austerity cuts. The conditionalities imposed by the international financial organization and the adjustment policies of Javier Milei, led in 6 months to a mega devaluation of the currency, an uncontrolled process of inflation growth, a significant loss of purchasing power of employees, retirees and the population in general, the exponential reduction of public spending in nominal terms with great consequences in real terms, the paralysis of public works and investments in the private sector, layoffs in the public sector, the contraction of trade and industry, and the exponential growth of poverty and destitution, which affects more than 60% of the population unable to meet basic needs. The adoption of the so-called Base Law puts a weak legislative branch at the centre of the scene, which confuses governability with complicity.

In Europe, austerity measures have also been imposed to various degrees since the 2008 economic crisis, often associated to measures aimed at weakening trade union power. The ensuing cost-of-living crises have spread feelings of anxiety and disempowerment amongst working communities. In search of reasons why their conditions are worsening, many have been seduced by the easy narrative of the far-right that scapegoats and blames the most vulnerable in our societies.

It is essential to create alliances that allow us to regain confidence in politics as the master key to democracies. The demand for autocratic governments, whose acts of government challenge



constitutional mandates, calls into question democratic institutions which are an indispensable context for the participation and free organization of workers through unionism.

Hope not hate

In spite of this context, working people are taking a stand. In their trade unions, they are registering important wins to defend their jobs, pay and conditions. At national level, historic mobilisations against austerity cuts and in defence of democracy are laying the foundations for the victories of tomorrow.

Our struggle must be the struggle of society as a whole and that is why unions and the different expressions of society join together in defence of democracy, freedoms and our rights. Unity in diversity is our strongest tool against these policies.

The fight for our institutions, for democracy and for our freedoms is international. We commit to continue working together to coordinate, inspire and innovate towards our shared objective.

Signatures:

ETUC



CGT Argentina,



CTA-Trabajadores and



CTA-Autónoma]

