

**ETUC solidarity message to our colleagues in Austria – Together for a fair deal for workers, together against austerity!**

Across Europe, the real wages of millions of workers suffered a reduction not seen for many years. Now more than ever, ETUC calls for a pay rise: The cost of living crisis is putting additional pressure on workers who struggle to afford the most basic standard of living. Protecting purchasing power in the current cost of living crisis and closing the gap between high and low wages is crucial. Wage increases have, for too long, lagged behind productivity in many Member States.

**Together with our affiliates, the ETUC mobilises for a fair deal for workers. This is why we stand in solidarity with our colleagues in Austria who are navigating a historic moment in the commerce sector.** The strikes taking place for the first time in decades underscore the significance of the challenges faced by workers.

There are about 430,000 workers in the Austrian commerce sector, a majority of them are women. We underscore that women workers are particularly affected by cost of living crisis and low wages: In addition to the gender pay gap, their work often remains undervalued. The 3-days warning strikes in 300 shops speak volumes about the determination of our colleagues to secure fair and just conditions in their workplaces. We stand in solidarity with each and every worker who took a stand for their rights!

As our Austrian colleagues approach the critical fifth round of negotiations scheduled for December 7th, it is pivotal to emphasize the importance of fair wages. The demand for more than 9.2%, aligned with the average inflation rate is not just a figure – it's a necessary condition for maintaining decent wages and purchasing power. The workers in the commerce sector deserve more than the employer's offer (+6% and a one-off payment).

ETUC supports the demands of ÖGB and stands with our affiliates in their pursuit of real wages that reflect the true value of their labour.

We urge the negotiating parties to consider the long-lasting impact of their decisions on the lives of the workers and their families. Fair wages are not just a matter of economic justice but also contribute to the overall well-being of society. As partners in the pursuit of decent working conditions, we remain committed to supporting ÖGB in their efforts to secure a just and equitable agreement.

In solidarity,

Esther Lynch,



General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation