



International Federation of Social Workers Fédération Internationale des Travailleurs Sociaux Federación Internacional de Trabajadores Sociales

18 March 2013

To: Commissioner László Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

We: The Portuguese Association of Professionals of Social Workers,
The Hellenic Association of Social Workers,
The Irish Association of Social Workers,
The Italian Association of Social Workers,
The General Spanish Council of Social Workers, together with
The International Federation of Social Workers:

As social workers we are committed to supporting, influencing and enabling structures and systems that positively address the root causes of poverty, oppression and inequality. We therefore call upon the European Union to implement the following:

1) Abandon the market driven and austerity directions by putting peoples' wellbeing and futures at the forefront of a new regulated economic framework (both public and private) which ensures stable, coherent and equitable environments.

This is not a crisis of the euro, it is a crisis for people. The EU's market driven strategy of pursuing 'austerity' and 'competition' is not producing the anticipated 'growth'. Instead it is producing entrenched poverty, placing the peoples of the affected countries at risk of civil violence, and critically undermining the possibilities for rebuilding the affected societies.

The EU directions are driving massive job losses, price increases, economic/social and personal depression, loss of the skilled workforce, business failure and increased inequality. Further, as people have lost access to adequate housing, health and education services critical problems are multiplying and will have lasting implications for the future generations. Such environments, as expected, have seen the significant growth of extreme right wing political parties/organisations that attack the vulnerable, disabled and immigrants, and hold the potential to destabilise democratic processes.

As international professionals who see the results of both strong and weak communities and societal structures, we witness that resourced and confident communities are the cornerstone of a stable and thriving economy. Businesses want to operate in environments where the workforce is skilled, secure, reliable and there is sustainable demand from consumers. We therefore call upon the EU to abandon austerity and free market approaches and urgently introduce new processes that bring the affected parties together to establish long-term and planned solutions, which emphasise: People living in a coherent, stable and equitable environments, and sustainable economies.

2) Maintain social work and social services during the crisis

Under austerity vulnerability has become mainstream. Without social work services to assist people to access food, shelter, warmth and sustainable support networks, the consequences of the current economic direction will be catastrophic for the growing numbers of unemployed and working poor in the austerity effected countries. Investing in social work and social services will contribute to reducing short-term suffering and mitigate some of the long term consequences of the crisis.

We therefore call on the EU and Member States to agree not to cut social work and social services.

For further enquires please contact the IFSW Secretary-General Dr Rory Truell: rory.truell@ifsw.org