

30 September 2013

Stop the attacks on Greek Workers NOW!

Joint solidarity with Greek Workers and their Trade Unions

IndustriAll European Trade Union and its affiliates are in Athens today to express European-wide support for the Greek workers in the face of the economic crisis and the current attacks on collective bargaining and the trade unions. They are also here to demonstrate solidarity with the Greek trade unionists due to stand trial in the Skaramanga naval shipyard case on 1st October.

In a meeting between industriAll Europe, Presidents of Greek affiliated unions and the Deputy Greek Minister of Labour this morning, industriAll Europe raised its concerns regarding the effects of the current austerity measures on industrial employment in Greece and the dramatic deterioration in industrial relations. It called on the Greek authorities and the troika to stop their attacks on collective agreements and trade union autonomy.

In the Skaramanga case, industriAll Europe specifically called for the charges against the 12 Greek trade union colleagues to be dropped and for all the parties concerned to return to the negotiating table to find a rapid and just solution for the workers who have suffered long enough from the indifference of both the management and the Ministry of Defence.

“Instead of supporting trade unions in their fight to retain industrial employment, the Greek authorities have criminalized their leaders” underlined industriAll Europe’s General Secretary Ulrich Eckelmann, referring to the court case. “From a moral perspective, we find it incomprehensible that the Greek authorities could give priority to taking demonstrators to court rather than dealing with the source of the problem at hand – the behaviour of the management of the Hellenic Shipyards that has simply and unlawfully ceased to pay its workforce,” he added.

The industriAll Europe Solidarity Conference held in Athens today looked at the effects of the neo-liberal austerity policies on the Greek economy: Jobs destroyed, budgets slashed, social systems dismantled, young people unable to find work and hundreds of thousands of Greek workers driven into poverty.

Instead of further pursuing a course that has only produced unemployment, especially amongst young people, economic degradation and social unrest, industriAll Europe suggests a change of cap towards investment, growth and employment by putting in place a recovery programme for the economies of the European Union aimed at long-term gains instead of short-term cuts. It also called for a genuine dialogue between the Government, employers and trade unions, and indeed all actors, if we were to find a fair solution for Greece.

IndustriAll Europe is ready and willing to debate its proposals in a dialogue with national governments and will actively promote it at the European level.

Linda Rackham

PA to Deputy General Secretary Bart Samyn & Press Officer