

## **FOR A SOCIAL EUROPE**

### ***Against neoliberal demolition policy and cutback of employment rights Solidarity with the people of Spain, Portugal and Greece***

Europe is on a wrong course. Economic decline and rigid austerity programmes to be borne by the majority of the population: This is a reality in many European countries three years after the beginning of the financial and debt crisis, which made a spectacular start with the Lehman bankruptcy in the USA in 2008. The policy of the Federal government and EU commission led to social splitting and endangers the democracy on our continent. Unemployment and poverty have increased to an extent that was unimaginable a few years ago. This is accompanied by massive attacks on employment and trade union rights: employment protection acts are being watered down, collective bargaining between trade unions and employers are being restricted or, like in Greece, prohibited completely - a clear violation of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Unilateral austerity threatens social achievements and the future of children and young persons. Instead of investing in education during the crisis, state expenditure in education is being cut down. Closing of schools, dismissal of teachers, cutting of wages and pensions, bigger class sizes, increase of compulsory teaching hours, privatization and outsourcing - these are measures taken by governments in Europe in answer to the financial and debt crisis.

- What are the effects of austerity in Greece, Portugal and Spain?
- What are the unions' answers to the crisis in Europe?
- How can we jointly defend our social and democratic rights in Europe?

We will discuss these questions with representatives of education unions from Greece, Portugal and Spain on 17 April 2012 in Frankfurt, on 18th April in Cologne and on 19th April in Dortmund:

- Manuela Mendonça (FENPROF - Portugal)
- Themistoklis Kotsifakis (OLME - Greece)
- Pedro Gonzales (FE.CC.OO - Spain)
- Ulrich Thöne (GEW - Germany) (in Dortmund: Sabine Graf – DGB NRW)

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