



European trade unions federations on the anti-strike legislation in the UK – bin it !

The European Trade Union Federations (ETUFs) representing tens of millions of workers across all countries and sectors in the EU and beyond in Europe strongly condemn the UK government's draft legislation on minimum service. It needs to be withdrawn.

The UK Conservative government created a mess by refusing to negotiate with workers. Workers demand recognition and decent pay and conditions and a response to the cost-of-living crisis. Instead of serious attempts to negotiate settlements to the current disputes about pay and staffing levels for public service workers, the Conservative government is pushing through a new bill that will impose minimum service levels on workers in public transport, health, education, fire and rescue services, border security and nuclear decommissioning. This legislation will include the possibility that strikers will be sacked if they fail to comply with notices to work.

The UK is already a country with very strict rules on ballots and voting thresholds. This contradicts the argument that they are aligning with the rest of the continent. Railway unions, for instance, have been taking industrial action about pay, job cuts and changes to terms and conditions. Decades of rail privatisation have not only jeopardised working conditions, but also the quality, safety and frequency of rail service across UK. This explains why the recent wave of strikes have been widely supported by UK citizens. Instead of tackling the root causes of this massive protest and proceeding with renationalising the rail system, the UK government has decided to hinder a fundamental trade union right. This is a battle for democracy, and European trade unions are fully behind their British trade unions.

Compared to other countries in Europe, the UK has some of the most draconian rights to strike. Instead of further limiting trade unions rights, the UK government should move to increase them! The UK government recently lifted the ban on the use of temporary agency to do scabbing. That is hardly a way to start a constructive bargaining process with workers and the unions.

All ETUFs stand in solidarity with their member organisations across the UK who are calling on the authorities to truly recognise the work of the sectors affected by these imposed minimum service levels. We call on the UK government to recognise collective bargaining as a tool to solve conflict.

EAEA, EFBWW, EFFAT, EFJ, EPSU, ETF, ETUCE, Euro-Cop, IndustriAll-Europe, UNI-Europa strongly support their UK affiliates. The federations send their solidarity for the day of action on 1 February called by the TUC which will see many protests around the country along with strike action coordinated across sectors.

EAEA - European Arts and Entertainment Alliance
 EURO-COP - European Confederation of Police
 EFBWW/FETBB - European Federation of Building and Woodworkers
 EFFAT - European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions
 EFJ/FEJ European Federation of Journalists
 IndustriAll European Federation for Industry and Manufacturing workers
 EPSU European Federation of Public Service Unions
 ETF European Transport Workers' Federation
 ETUCE/CSEE European Trade Union Committee for Education
 UNI-EUROPA European trade union federation for services and communication