

President Arzu Cerkezoglu
President of DISK

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Re: ETUC message of solidarity with DISK's actions for a fair deal for pensioners

Dear President Arzu Cerkezoglu,

Dear colleagues,
Dear friends,

On behalf of the European Trade Union Confederation and its 45 million members, from 93 trade union organisations in 41 European countries, I would like to – on the occasion of your demonstration, this 24 September, in Istanbul - express our solidarity with your actions for "a fair deal for pensioners".

For years, the ETUC has been campaigning for fair pensions, the reduction of inequalities, and the fight against poverty. In May last, at our 15th Congress, we reaffirmed our approach on the issue which i.a includes: embedding fair and people-centred retirement age; deleting the gender pension gap; ensuring an adequate pension, income- and work-related; guaranteeing an adequate minimum pensions above poverty protection for all generations; and securing the indexation of pensions according to raise of inflation and cost of life.

Indeed, the cost of living crisis and energy and housing poverty disproportionately affect the working poor and pensioners – especially women. Indexation and alignment to the cost of living of pensions and minimum standards are therefore needed. End last year, the inflation rate reached 83,4% in Türkiye, - the highest since 24 years – and was still around 50% in July this year.

We read that in 2002, the lowest labour pension was 40 percent *above* the minimum wage. But as of August 2023, the lowest worker pension is now 34.2 percent *below* the minimum wage which has, clearly, as result that it is becoming increasingly difficult for pensioners to live a decent life. In your country, about half of the pensioners are working again or looking for a job because their pensions are insufficient. Living in poverty can lead to stress, social health inequalities and social exclusion.

Minimum pensions should de facto allow beneficiaries to live in decent conditions, both economically and socially.

Presently, Turkey has – with the exception of Romania – the highest percentage of people living below the poverty line.

The ETUC calls therefore the Turkish Government to adopt an ambitious approach: low pensions would reduce the already decreasing purchasing power and increasing poverty for the beneficiaries and their families.

I wish you success for your demonstration of today, and for your campaign for decent pensions and justice in retirement. There are more than 14.7 million pensioners and beneficiaries in Türkiye, 10.2 million of whom are old-age pensioners, including widows and orphans. They deserve a well-functioning system, with regular access to retirement rights.

In solidarity,



Esther Lynch, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation