

Meeting 26/04/2019

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The European Federation of Retired and Elderly Persons is taking part in this ETUC European demonstration to demand a Europe founded on solidarity, equality, justice and social cohesion.

To demand a Europe that is fairer and more equitable, for the young, for the unemployed, for workers and pensioners, which will ensure a better future for all its citizens: women, men, young people, adults and the elderly, without discrimination based on gender or age.

We are here to ensure that the voices of 100 million elderly and retired people, who feel invisible, are heard in this ageing Europe.

We are here to demand the right to a secure, fair and decent retirement income for women and men, supported by public systems.

The right to efficient, long-term and high-quality public health care, which protects against chronic illness and loss of independence.

The right to an active old age, so that pensioners and the elderly can continue to play an important role in society, as the elderly are a huge resource for all European countries. And they want to remain so.

We are here to demand, together with the workers, an increase in social dialogue, in order to tackle the growing poverty in all European countries, which also affects many elderly people, especially women. Material poverty and also energy poverty, because thousands of elderly people die in Europe every year due to lack of heating and hot water. And this is unacceptable.

And above all we are here to demand the right to decent and fairly paid work for all, women and men, with equal gender opportunities. Without work it is not possible to assure well-being or a future for anyone, particularly the young. Without work there are no guarantees for pensions, either our own pensions or future pensions.

We need a strong intergenerational commitment in relation to work, to provide prospects and hope to young people, our children and grandchildren. Young and old are not and must not be represented as antagonists. Rather they are fighting the same battle, because the ageing of the European population is not a negative factor, but a challenge to be overcome. A challenge which can, and must, produce good new employment for young people in many sectors: from health to social welfare, from technological innovation to town planning, from home automation to robotics.

Let's build a society for people together: one that is accessible, safe, welcoming, just and fair. For everyone.

As Ferpa we are sending our demands, with a card, to all candidates in the European Parliament elections.

We want a European policy which helps pensioners and elderly people to continue to live and age with dignity, with adequate pensions and efficient health and social services.

Colleagues and friends, we must fight together for an inclusive and non-bureaucratic Europe, which listens to social partners as bargainers and mediators between politics and the needs of millions of workers and pensioners.

A Europe in which the individual countries abandon austerity policies and stop cutting rights, pensions, salaries and services.

A Europe which can once again be proud of its democratic and welfare state tradition.

We are pensioners and we are elderly, but with a strong desire to remain protagonists of change, together with you.

If we continue to fight together, there will be no nationalist or populist parties or movements or even European bureaucrats that can stop us.

And this huge demonstration is proof of this.

Long live Ferpa. Long live ETUC.