



GEF and Green Institute Greece workshop

'Workers' rights: Is the crisis creating a race to the bottom?'

Friday, 9 November 2012, 14.00-15.30

The sovereign debt and financial crisis has brought about worrying trends in labour law reform both in old and new EU Member States. A wave of deregulatory measures of labour law was seen in response to the economic crisis, with the aim of rendering labour markets more flexible. In the name of flexibility, workers' rights have been significantly affected: in many countries collective bargaining was decentralised to company level; periods of notice in case of redundancy were diminished; new reasons were allowed for individual dismissals; new types of contracts with less protection for specific groups (e.g. young workers) were created; rules on compensation of overtime were changed to the detriment of the worker etc. These reforms did not create the extra employment opportunities that were hoped; on the contrary they only lead to precariousness and in work poverty. The "working poor" have become a European reality. Analysing this European reality - are there certain trends to be found in certain groups of countries? What is the real influence of the crisis on the changes underway? What is the Green response to these trends? How can these regressive policies be reversed? With such reforms being imposed also from the Troika (e.g. the 6 days work week in Greece), where is the leverage for change and how can basic workers' rights be protected in Europe? Input: Marije Cornelissen (Greens/EFA MEP), Sarah King (ETUI/ European Trade Union Institute) and Petros Rylmon (Labour Institute - Greek Workers' General Confederation)

Moderator: Pierre Jonckheer (Co-president GEF)

**The above session was organised in the context of the 17th Council of the European Green Party, GREENS/EFA Group in the European Parliament (Athens, 9-11 November 2012).*