

21 November 2011

Our Ref: 7.73.I.C

Mário Nogueira,  
General Secretary,  
FENPROF.

Dear Mario,

## **THE STATE OF EDUCATION & TEACHERS IN PORTUGAL**

On behalf of the Irish Federation of University Teachers which is the primary union representing Academic and Research Staff in Higher Education in the Republic of Ireland I want to express our solidarity with you and your colleagues in the face of the reductions and cutbacks being imposed on higher education in Portugal.

Together with FENPROF, and indeed in harmony with educators all over the world, it is our firm belief that investment in higher education should never be regarded simply as expenditure. It is what it's termed to be i.e. an investment. Furthermore, our history shows that an investment in education reaps rich dividends for any country which is enlightened enough to maintain the investment at appropriate levels.

Ireland and Portugal are both going through very difficult times financially. Both your union and our union are very conscious of this. We are not naive nor are we in denial about the state of the real economy. However, it is undeniable that both countries will require a vibrant energetic and relevant higher education system if we are ever to drag ourselves out of the depths of economic stagnation to which we have been reduced.

I'm sending a copy of this letter to your President, to your Prime Minister and to your Minister for Education and Science in the hope that a voice of solidarity from colleagues in Ireland, a country which shares so many of the problems currently besetting Portugal, will have some influence and will make your leaders think again about the needless damage that will be done to Portugal's future if investment in higher education is reduced.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

*Mike Jennings,*  
*General Secretary.*

c. Manuela Mendonca, International Secretary, FENPROF  
President of the Republic  
Prime Minister  
Minister of Education & Science