



NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS HEADQUARTERS

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General Secretary Christine Blower
Deputy General Secretary Kevin Courtney

4 June 2013

Pedro Passos Coelho
Prime Minister
gabinete.pm@pm.gov.pt

Dear Prime Minister,

RE: Solidarity with teachers in Portugal

In solidarity with teachers in Portugal I am writing to call on the Portuguese government to withdraw its latest proposal, which seeks to dismiss thousands of teachers without access to any support.

The provision of education in Portugal is in danger as funding is cut and schools are merged or closed down. The recent measures proposed by the government are more severe than ever before. I condemn these measures and call for an immediate investment in the education sector.

I understand that teaching hours are envisioned to increase to 40 per week while teachers' salaries are cut. The troika of international lenders – the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank – has called for cuts which will affect the functioning of schools, the quality of education and the social support to students and their families. This is unacceptable.

The severe education budget cuts proposed in the budgetary amendment will result in further school mergers, increased class sizes, greater segregation of students with special needs, less social support to families from poorer backgrounds and dismissals of other education employees. Cuts in the education budget will have adverse social effects and jeopardise the future of Portugal. I call on the Portuguese government to ensure free and equal access to high quality public education.

I support all who defend quality public education in Portugal and call on the Portuguese government to invest in education and to immediately reverse the proposed unjust austerity measures.

Yours sincerely

CHRISTINE BLOWER
General Secretary

cc: Minister of Education and Science, Nuno Crato
FENPROF
FNE
SINDEP
British Embassy, Portugal