



Durham Declaration

Together for the right to strike!

Industrial action is an essential part of the global fundamental right to the freedom of association and democracy in the world of work. Without it, exploitation can go unchecked, increasing inequalities and damaging workers' pay and health.

For unions at the negotiating table, collective bargaining is akin to begging unless their members are able to collectively walk out from their workplaces to put pressure on their employer counterparts. Restricting the right to strike automatically increases inequalities, with serious repercussions on everyone in society.

Despite being enshrined in several international conventions, including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, this fundamental right of the working people is under threat around the world, including the UK and other European countries such as Finland, Hungary and France. At the level of the ILO, the right to strike is being challenged by employers.

Forty years on from the 1984-85 UK miners' strike, and on the eve of the Durham Miners' Gala, we reaffirm our commitment to stand united, within the international and European trade union movement, and to strongly push back against all attacks on the right to strike.

Striking is sometimes the only tool workers have got to defend themselves. We will never silently watch our most fundamental right being attacked. Let us raise our voices to protect this essential principle of collective bargaining.

Work stoppages are an essential tool that guarantees a certain balance between workers and employers.

Finally, as part of the defence of the right to strike, we must also denounce and combat the criminalisation of trade union actions. Too many trade unionists who dare to resist and express workers' just demands are the victims of proceedings against them. Those who fight against harmful laws or projects pay the price of unacceptable repressive policies that we need to denounce and put an end to.

Signed in Durham, England on Friday, 12 July 2024