

2 OCTOBER

The ETUC today (2 October) passed an emergency motion on Northern Ireland, declaring support for peaceful progress and against the re-imposition of direct rule and further austerity.

The 13th Congress of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) is taking place in central Paris, with the leaders of trade union organisations all over Europe, representing 60 million workers from Lisbon to Helsinki, under one roof for the first time in four years.

Taking part in the Congress are : 500 national trade union delegates including the General Secretaries and/or Presidents of some 90 national trade union organisations from 39 European countries, 10 European sectoral trade union federations and special guests from Europe and beyond. The last Congress was in 2011.

Attending the Congress from Northern Ireland are **Peter Bunting**, Assistant General Secretary, ICTU, accompanied by **Brian Campfield**, (President, ICTU) and **Patricia King** (General Secretary, ICTU).

Motions have been passed on international issues such as climate change, the refugee crisis, TTIP and other trade deals as well as EU-wide campaigns for investment and against austerity policies, by the EU and national governments.

This morning, delegates passed unanimously the motion below from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions:

**Emergency motion on Northern Ireland
Adopted at the ETUC 13th Congress on 2 October 2015**

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions as a matter of urgency requests this Congress to intervene in demanding the political parties in Northern Ireland with the assistance of the British Irish and U.S Governments to resolve the political impasse in Northern Ireland.

This Congress supports the Devolved Administration of Northern Ireland and demands that the Governments involved in the negotiations provide a financial stimulus necessary to ensure the continuation of the political institutions.

The austerity measures being imposed on the citizens of Northern Ireland by the Tory Government in Westminster are a major impediment to the resolution of the political impasse. Northern Ireland remains a society emerging from conflict. A society which has the lowest levels of any region in the UK of investment, educational attainment, and the highest levels of mental ill-health, suicide rate 70% higher of any region, poverty, security spend, economic inactive.

The failure to achieve a political resolution in the talks which commenced this week will result in the fall of the political institutions and direct rule of Northern Ireland by the Westminster Government, the consequences of which are unimaginable for the workers and citizens of Northern Ireland and would result in the emergence from the shadows of so called dissident para-military groups to fill the political vacuum.

The Trade Union movement on the Island of Ireland assisted by other Confederations throughout Europe and the U.S has been central to the peace project. But for its role in maintaining the unity of workers irrespective of political or religious ideology outright civil war could have ensued.

Congress resolves to support the ICTU to maintain that peace project.

ETUC Congress

<https://www.etuc.org/documents/emergency-motion-northern-ireland#.Vg5TUreFPIU>

For more information on the ETUC Congress, see: <https://www.etuc.org/press/european-trade-union-congress-kicks-tomorrow#.Vg5WtLeFPIV>