

30th of November General feminist strike

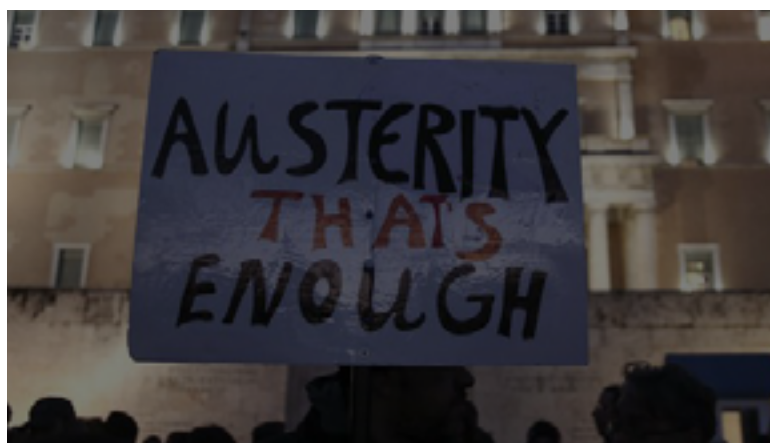
The feminist movement, working alongside trade union and social agents, has called a general strike for the 30th of November to demand a public, universal, free and high quality public care system. All the workers in Hego Euskal Herria have been called to this strike and the entire trade union is immersed in the organisation process of the strike.



The public sector at war!

This autumn, in the Basque Country, many strikes and protests are taking place in the public sector due to the decline in public services, the worsening of working conditions and the deterioration that this means to the quality of the assistance offered to citizens. On the 25th of October and the 19th of December all the public employees in the Basque Country, around 150,000, have been called to strike.

In addition to these dates, there are organised stoppages in certain areas throughout the autumn.



Austerity policies cannot be brought back

With less than two months to go before the end of the year, there is still no agreement regarding tax regulation reform. Last May, the European Commission presented a clearly insufficient proposal, which could be even worse for those countries with a high ratio of public debt after the last negotiations between the Commission and the Member States.

The so-called frugal countries, led by Germany, are tightening their belts to ensure the return in 2024 of the austerity policies imposed after the 2008 crisis. ELA has repeatedly denounced that these policies would mean a new deterioration in public services and a clear cutback in social rights.



30th of November: General feminist strike

Since February, 2022, ELA has been taking part in assemblies led by the feminist movement and this strike obeys a long reflection process. As a result of this process, a general feminist strike has been called in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (ACBC) and Navarra for the 30th of November, which seeks to put care at the centre of the debate.

And the fact is that out of the total working hours that are carried out in our territory, both paid and unpaid, 61% involve care. Jobs that are undervalued and invisible.

There is an unequal division of care work, as it is almost completely carried out by women, and in many cases racially-discriminated women. In addition, or precisely for this reason, to a large extent it is carried out in conditions of job insecurity and exploitation. It is essential to bring an end to the sexual and racial division of the work.

Within the field of professionalised care, commodification predominates. Profit-making intentions prevail over the well-being of the people, as the Public Administrations erode the job security and living conditions of both the workers and the users. Currently, virtually all the services aimed at the most vulnerable people (the elderly, dependent people, those with functional diversity, socially excluded...) are outsourced. In the ACBC and Navarra, for example, only 12% of the care homes for the elderly are publicly managed.

The main demand of the general feminist strike is the construction of the group right to care, transforming the current social organisation of care and building a decent public-Basque community system.

For many years now ELA has been working towards these goals. Proof of this are the three days of strike called in the ACBC and Navarra within the care field after the pandemic: on the 17th of November, 2020; the 26th of January, 2021 and on the 4th of March, 2021. In addition, the trade union has seen countless struggles, along with their achievements, in the sector of the care of the most vulnerable people. In fact, in 2023, two thirds of the strikes carried out in the ACBC and Navarra have been staged by women.

These strikes play an essential role in the fight for an alternative care system to the one offered to us by the capitalist system: public, free, universal and of course, with high quality, for both the workers and for the people using it. But it is essential to take new, more important steps in favour of public care. For this reason, the general feminist strike on the 30th of November is imperative. All the workers have been called to this strike and the entire trade union is immersed in the strike organisation process.

As a trade union and as in any general strike, the organisation process is long as we have to reach all the delegates and all the members of the trade union. In the months prior to the strike, ELA's priority lies in the general feminist strike: holding assemblies of delegates in all the regions, receiving the support of the works councils, organising assemblies of members in the work centres, socialising the strike in the streets...

In addition to the work that ELA is carrying out internally, there are many members of the trade union who are taking part in the strike committees that have been organised in different cities, towns and districts.

Along with the demand regarding the public, universal, free and high quality care system, to put care at the centre of our society, effective steps to balance personal life, care and employment are also essential. Less time must be devoted to employment in order to be able to put care at the centre and the most effective step to do this is the reduction in the general working time. It is also urgent for the care work to be divided up in a fair way and to do this, it is crucial for men to take on their responsibilities on this point.

Because looking after ourselves is a joint endeavour, everyone must strike on the 30th of November!

+info

The public sector at war!



The atmosphere has become heated in the public sector. The workers are becoming increasingly angry, and with good reason. The decline in public services, the worsening of working conditions and the deterioration that this causes in the quality of the assistance offered to citizens have meant that during this autumn in the Basque Country many strikes and protests are taking place in the sector. On the 25th of October and the 19th of December all the public employees in the Basque Country, around 150,000, have been called to strike. In addition to these dates, there are organized stoppages in certain areas throughout the autumn.

11th of October in university education and research personnel

24th of October in non-university public education

25th of October and 19th of December in the entire public sector

30th and 31st of October in the social intervention sector of Vizcaya

8th, 9th and 10th of November and 12th, 13th and 14th of December in the care homes for the elderly in Araba

30th of November general feminist strike

Concerns and complaints have been rising in the public sector for some time, at least since the 2009 crisis. And the fact is that since then, the Local Governments' General Table of Negotiations has not signed any work agreements, while the last agreement signed in education was in 2010, the public health service in 2007-2009 and the town councils agreement in 2008-2010. For this reason, the trade unions are questioning all the institutions: the Basque Government, provincial councils and town councils.

In order to understand the situation, it is important to take some data into consideration:

- Investment in health in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (ACBC) is well behind others in Europe: 5.7% of the GDP, below that of the State (in Europe it is 8% of the GDP).
- Investment in education is also behind Europe: 4.24% of the GDP in the ACBC, below that of the Spanish State and only above the public investment in Romania and Ireland.
- Working conditions: in the public sector, there have been over 10 years without any regulating agreements, the temporary work rate is 49% - the highest in Europe and triple the figure for the private sector, the loss of spending power has been above 20% over the past decade and the cutbacks and lack of personnel are seriously affecting the physical and emotional health of the workforce. Without forgetting that there are over 100,000 people working in the privatised public sector.

In view of this situation, **the main trade union demands are as follows:**

- Removing the limits marked out by the State to be able to decide on employment requirements and salaries in the Basque Country.
- Passing a budget that allows the public services to be strengthened.
- A 10% wage rise to recover the loss of spending power from the last two years and to guarantee the same in 2024. Additionally, the debt on the previously lost spending power must be acknowledged, along with a real commitment to recover it.
- Creating and stabilising public employment, reducing real temporary jobs to 8%.
- Strengthening the public area: a commitment to not carry out any new privatisations and agree on nationalisation plans for services that have already been privatised, guaranteeing the subrogation of the workforce.
- Reducing workloads and agreeing on steps to guarantee the health of the workforce.
- Agreeing on plans that guarantee effective speaking of the Basque language within the public administration.
- Negotiating and agreeing on steps regarding gender that mean real steps forward towards equality, including amongst others, the preparation of real, effective equality plans.
- Reducing the working day, bringing it closer to 32 hours a week.

It is important to keep in mind that the personnel's working conditions and the quality of the public services go hand in hand. Those who most need strong, free, quality public services, with professionals who are well-looked after, motivated and qualified are the working classes and the ordinary citizens. For this reason, at ELA we will continue fighting to ensure that the workers demands in the public sector are met.



Austerity policies cannot be brought back

The European Commission has warned the Member States that they will have to tighten their belts again from 2024 onwards. After four years in which Europe has loosened its hold, austerity will be back, with its famous tax regulations, which have caused so much pain since the 2008 crisis. For 2024, they will be back with the SGP's normal strictness, but incorporating some elements of a new framework on which the European Commission is working and that will, foreseeably, come into effect in 2025.

The reform of the EU's economic governing framework is clearly continuing along the same lines as previous reforms. The references continue to be the same ones (3% of public deficit and 60% of public debt over GDP) and although it is true that countries will have a four year deadline (extendable for another three years) to decrease their debt and the specificity of each State will be taken into account, the reality is that the tax and budgetary policy of countries with a high debt ratio will be intervened. This will be articulated through the fiscal and structural plans, the keystone of this reform, true to its 'Next Generation' style, which will be evaluated by the European institutions on a yearly basis and that will impose sanctions (economic, reputational and withdrawal of European funds) for countries that do not meet the agreement. For example, countries with a deficit higher than 3% will have an adjustment of 0.5% of the GDP, which would mean, according to data from the European Confederation of Trade Unions, a cutback of 45 billion euros on a European scale.

The countries that had a high public debt after 2008 remain in the same situation today, in spite of the restrictive tax policies. The Spanish State, at present, has a public debt of 111.2%, almost double that established by the SGP. Therefore, it will have to present a tax plan and the European Commission will force it to take austerity steps to control public spending, until a drop starts to be seen in the debt. And this will have the same consequences in the budgets of the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (ACBC) and Navarra.

In ELA we believe that the European Union will continue to incur in the same mistakes from the past if it places its priority on keeping the deficit and public debt low, rather than on the well-being of the European citizens. We cannot allow the only instrument used to maintain healthy accounts to be the adjustment of public spending. The European Commission refuses to develop a more progressive tax policy, where the wealthy, along with large companies make a fair contribution, in order to be able to increase public spending and maintain some balanced public accounts.

The recipes of the past have caused an obvious deterioration in public services, with investment in health and education lagging behind in Europe, and with increasingly precarious working conditions. Good proof of this are the mobilizations and strikes that ELA is promoting in the Basque public sector. Austerity policies cannot be brought back. A progressive fiscal reform is needed.