



Statement by Jerónimo de Sousa, General Secretary of the Portuguese Communist Party

**The General Strike of 14th November 2012:
A great General Strike, a powerful day of struggle**

Today's General Strike, on 14th November 2012, called by CGTP-IN, against exploitation and impoverishment, for Portugal with a future, constitutes a great General Strike, one of the biggest ever to date, a powerful affirmation by the Portuguese workers and people of rejection of the Pact of Aggression by the troikas, of a clear statement that it is necessary to put an end to this government and this policy, before this policy and this government put an end to the country.

The General Strike had a strong impact across the whole country, in the different regions and sectors of activity, in industry and services, in the private sector and in the public sector.

In Industry with complete shutdowns in many enterprises like Arsenal do Alfeite [shipyards], the Viana do Castelo Shipyards, Lisnave Mitrena, Browning and very high support with almost full stoppages at the Autoeuropa [Wolkswagen] industrial park, and in many other companies among which we emphasise Fisipe, Visteon, Bosch, Exide/Ex.Tudor, Roberto Bosch, Centralcer, Kraft, Acral, Têxtilminho. Tessimax, Paulo Oliveira, Trekar, St. Gobain, Sotancro, Cerâmica Abrigada, Valorsul, Portucel/Setúbal, Europack, Fraas.

In the Fisheries with great support and several fishing auctions and fishing ports completely shutdown.

In Transport with total or near-total shutdown of the Lisbon Metro, Metro Sul do Tejo [Almada city surface metro], CP [railways], STCP [Oporto city transport], and the public transports in the cities of Braga, Guimarães, Coimbra, Barreiro, a support not seen in Carris [Lisbon bus and tram] for years, very great support in Transtejo and Soflusa [Tagus river ferries], Atlantic Ferries, TST [south margin of Tagus private company of passengers transports], Rodoviária do Tejo, Barraqueiro and in general in the private passenger transport all over the country. There was also an unparalleled stoppage of the Madeira transport company (Empresa dos Horários do Funchal). There was also stoppage in most of the national ports. In aviation transport there was the cancellation of more than 70% of the flights at Lisbon airport, a very high stoppage at the Faro and Oporto airports, the cancellation of all flights at the Madeira airport (excepting the two minimum service flights) and, in the Azores, the flight connections were restricted to the minimum services, given the SATA stoppage.

In the Postal service with great support from CTT [Post and telegraph company] workers and also in other companies like DHL.

In Public Administration there was a large and strong support. In the Healthcare system with expressions in most hospitals and health centres; in Education as a whole and in higher education, with a significant support from auxiliary workers involved in education and teachers and with impact in the functioning, with hundreds of schools closed and others functioning very partially, in social security, in justice, in finance and other services.

In Local Administration with a full or almost total standstill, in most municipalities, in the waste collection and a very strong support in the municipal services and most other local government activities.

In Services one has to enhance the increase and dimension of the support observed in the large commercial distribution, like Continente Montijo, Cascais Shopping, Jumbo in Faro and in various degrees in many other big commercial establishments, in the financial sector with more than hundred branches closed and in the area of social establishments and structures namely in IPSS [private institutions of social solidarity] and Misericórdias [mercy institutions].

A strike with strong expression in the field of arts and entertainment, with significant support as exemplified at the CCB [Belem cultural centre], D. Maria National Theatre, Maria Matos theatre, among many others.

The General Strike reaches the biggest ever expression in several regions, as was the case of the Autonomous Region of Madeira.

Also to be stressed is the strike by hundreds of thousands of workers with precarious labour links and the fact that many workers went on strike for the very first time.

This day of struggle involves great work in terms of organisation and the participation of thousands and thousands of workers on picket lines in their companies and workplaces.

In the dimension of this day of struggle emerges the participation of many thousands of people in the demonstrations and concentrations, around 40, taking place all over the country.

With over a million and three hundred thousand unemployed workers, a very high level of labour precarity, despite crunched family budgets, increasing shortages, threats, constraints and repressive measures, the workers massively joined the General Strike, in a huge display of courage and determination.

Government's intents of intimidation and repression, particularly by trying to instrumentalize the security forces, with serious incidents, namely the violent action by the GNR [National Guard] on the picket line at the Pampilhosa Railway station, failed its aims. In contrast with the government's intents, we have to highlight the attitude of respect for constitutional rights shown by the security forces in general, themselves victims of this policy of disaster.

The PCP salutes the Portuguese workers for their participation in this day of struggle, in defence of their interests and rights, of the aspirations of the Portuguese people, of the future of Portugal.

The PCP salutes CGTP-IN, the great trade-union confederation of the Portuguese workers, the leaders and activists and the impressive set of trade-union organisations and other structures representing the workers who, united in action, gave expression to this memorable day of struggle by the Portuguese workers and people.

The PCP stresses that just as the Portuguese workers defend their interests and rights with the General Strike, also the workers from other European countries – whom the PCP salutes – in the context of their specific conditions, resist and fight in defence of their interests and rights, against the anti-social offensive led by big capital, its political representatives and structures.

The General Strike and the courageous response given by the Portuguese workers gain more topicality when the INE [National Institute of Statistics] today revealed the data for the third annual quarter which confirms the deepening of the recession and is dramatically expressive on the growth of unemployment. The increase within a quarter of the number of unemployed by more than 44 thousand, raising the official unemployment rate to 15.8% and in a broader sense to 23.7%, which corresponds to more than a million and 369 thousand unemployed, represents a significant expression of the deterioration of the social situation, on the way to sinking the country

While Portugal is hit by a strong offensive of worsening exploitation, impoverishment and national disaster, we have the unstoppable development of the mass struggle of the past months and of the past weeks with the struggles underway in the companies and workplaces, large actions in September, particularly the huge demonstration on 29th September at the Lisbon plaza of *Terreiro do Paço*, the march against unemployment, the actions by the small and medium-size companies, the farmers, the security force professionals, the military, the populations. It is the workers, it is the whole people who are disturbed, indignant and fight.

Today's General Strike, with the historical dimension it attained and the determination it showed, holds a clear sign. It represents a strong jolt to the government and its policy, a government and a policy that are harmful and discredited. It represents a strong demand to defeat the State Budget for 2013, a budget of disaster which should not be adopted, promulgated or applied. It represents an undeniable demonstration of the will of the Portuguese workers and people of rejection of the Pact of Aggression. It represents an affirmation of the need for a rupture with the right-wing policy, the implementation of a new course bound by the values of the April Revolution that materialize the project enshrined by the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic.

The dimension of the General Strike demands that political consequences be drawn from it.

Today's General Strike constitutes a great day of protest, a powerful demonstration of strength and confidence, a great day to build Portugal with a future.

The PCP calls for a continuation of the development of mass struggle, right now with a participation in the action set for the morning of 27th November, in front of the National Parliament, on the day of the discussion and voting of the State Budget for 2013, its intensification, a strengthening of a vast social front and the necessary convergence to build the foundations for a patriotic and left-wing alternative, able to ensure Portugal with a future.