



Message of European movements of ICYCW for 1st May 2009

Here we are celebrating for another year the International Worker's Day on May 1st. One more year, looking back to the past we remember the workers' fight in Chicago, the ones that in 1886 fought for the eight hours working day. One more year, living the present, we go out to protect our rights. One more year, looking forward the future, we go out to say that a better world is possible.

The celebration of this year is marked by a worldwide economic crisis. A crisis caused by the greediness of some people, by the injustice and the lack of humanity of the ruling economical system. A crisis that, like any crisis, will be paid by workers, as a result workers find themselves in unemployment, temporary contracts, less security, less rights. A crisis that affects particularly the most vulnerable, such as women, immigrants and young people.

This crisis affects our lives at different levels. At the working level, in the Europe of 15, 430 youngsters under 25 die every year. We suffer around 40% of not mortal working accidents. We stand the highest unemployment rate, 20% between 15 and 19 years and 18% between 15 and 24 years (*European Agency for Safety and Health at Work*). These figures are young people with names and surnames. Like Thomas, a young electrician learner that died in a working accident; Susana, that lost a finger that was caught in the machine she was working with; Marie that had to leave his job as a hairdresser due to the dermatitis that was caused by the chemical products she was using; or Alfonso that only has known part-time jobs; or Ines that doesn't know what an indefinite contract means.



At the educative level, the introduction of the European Higher Education Area means the commercialization of highest education and the reduction of opportunities for youngster from the working class. The Bolkestein directive is still a menace for workers. The European directive of immigrant return makes it clear that we forgot that, not a long time ago, Europe sent groups of immigrants to other continents, reducing human beings into a piece of merchandise that once they become unnecessary, they are returned to their birthplace. This is another cause of shame for our continent because it impoverishes the rest of the planet without observance.

In spite of all that has been said, we have to keep hope alive. Hope that is established in a concrete plan of action that brings us to God's kingdom. Facts like the disapproval of the European directive about working hours, the 65-hours directive in the European Parliament, are signs of hope that confirm what He already told us "I have heard the clamour of my people" (*Ex 6,5*).