

PRESENTATION

TRADE UNION SOLIDARITY MEETING WITH THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN SAHARA 2024 FOR SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE

A **Trade Union Solidarity Meeting** with the people of Western Sahara will be held in **Lisbon on the morning of 29 November 2024, between 9.00am and 12.30pm**, bringing together representatives from the world of work, in particular from the trade union movement of several countries.

Portugal was chosen to host this initiative because this year marks the 50th anniversary of the democratic revolution of **25 April 1974**, which also began the process of decolonisation of the Portuguese colonies, which only ended in 1999 with the holding of the referendum of self-determination for the people of Timor-Leste.

Western Sahara is Africa's last colony, illegally occupied by Morocco since 1975. **All international legal bodies** - from the International Court of Justice (1975), to all the UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the issue, to the Court of Justice of the European Union (2016, 2018 and 2021) and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (2022) - **recognise these two facts**: Western Sahara is a Non-Self-Governing Territory, pending decolonisation, and is therefore entitled to a genuine, free and fair process of self-determination. To this end, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was created in 1991 and is still on the ground, waiting to fulfil its mission.

The objectives proposed for this meeting are:

- › to discuss concrete forms of solidarity of the trade union movement with the cause of the Saharawi people and with Saharawi workers;
- › to reaffirm the justice and urgency of holding a referendum on self-determination to allow the Saharawi people to decide freely on their future and to protect the territory's natural resources from illegal exploitation.

The programme, which is currently being drawn up, will focus on two main themes:

- › the situation of Saharawi workers in the occupied territory and in the refugee camps;
- › the protection of the natural resources of Western Sahara against illegal exploitation of these resources by the Moroccan occupying power (considering the final ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union).



The proposal for a **Manifesto of solidarity** will be presented and discussed so that it can be signed by the organisations present and publicised at the end of the meeting. To broaden its support, the Manifesto may continue to receive signatures for a period to be determined.

The **Trade Union Solidarity Meeting** is organised by the Task Force of the European Coordination for Support and Solidarity with the Saharawi People (EUCOCO), the saharawi General Union of Workers of Saguia El Hamra and Rio de Oro (UGTSARIO), the Representation of the POLISARIO Front in Portugal and the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers – National Intersindical (CGTP-IN). It is supported by the General Workers' Union (UGT).

The meeting is open, free of charge, to all trade union organisations that have been invited and that confirm their participation using the form indicated in the invitation. The organising committee will not pay for travel or accommodation for the meeting.

This meeting precedes the 48th EUCOCO Conference, which will take place on the afternoon of 29 November and throughout 30 November 2024 and is the most important initiative of the year for the international solidarity movement with the Saharawi people. **The opening session of the conference, starting at 3pm, is open to guests, including the trade union organisations taking part in the Trade Union Solidarity Meeting.** The other sessions are intended for organisations (including trade unions) and persons registered before the end of October to take part in the Conference, using a specific form and with a contribution per individual participant of €175, which is a contribution to the expenses of the Conference and entitles the participants to three meals during the event and coffee breaks. **All the information about the EUCOCO 48 Conference**, its programme, registration form and other practical aspects involved are available at www.eucoco.org.

To facilitate the proceedings of both events, which will take place in the **Grand Auditorium, building 2 of Iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa** (Avenida das Forças Armadas), there will be interpretation in four languages: Portuguese, Spanish, French and English.

September 2024



Task Force of the European Coordination for Support and Solidarity with the Saharawi People



General Union of Workers of Saguia El Hamra and Rio de Oro



Representation of the POLISARIO Front in Portugal



General Confederation of Portuguese Workers – National Intersindical

With the support of



General Workers' Union

