



## **28 April: International Workers' Memorial Day**

### **The Coronavirus pandemic illustrates the need for first class protection measures at the workplace**

The International Labour Organisation says that every year more than 2.78 million people die as a result of occupational accidents or work-related diseases.

In March 2021 the ILO moved closer to making Occupational Health & Safety a Fundamental Right at Work and the International Trade Union Confederation designated the theme for this year's Workers' Memorial Day on 28 April as: "Health & safety is a fundamental workers' right".

Trade unions in Europe's capitals endorse this theme. Tens of thousands of workers in our capital cities have lost their lives during the pandemic. The recognition that employers have not prioritised the safety of our essential workers – such as health care staff, transport workers, as well as those in education and retail – is increasingly understood. Some employers have placed profit over the health and safety of their workers with shortages of personal protective equipment and overcrowded workplaces.

Coordinator of the European Capitals Trade Union Network Christina Theochari said: "No worker should go to work and not return home safely. The pandemic has added yet another danger to the workplace. This demonstrates and reinforces why health and safety must be a fundamental right for everyone who works. Health and safety at work is our priority!"

#### **Notes for editors:**

- The European Capitals Trade Union Network (<http://www.ectun.eu/>) is an informal network of the trade union organisations in the European capital cities and regions. All trade unions whose national confederation is an affiliate of the European Trade Union Confederation and/or of the Pan-European Regional Council may participate in ECTUN.
- International Workers' Memorial Day (also known as World Day of Safety and Health at Work) was established as 28 April in 1989 when the AFL-CIO in the United States declared 28 April Workers' Memorial Day. It is recognised by the International Labour Organisation,

the International Trade Union Confederation, and the United Nations as a day of remembrance of workers killed in accidents at work, or diseases caused by work.

- The existing fundamental rights at work recognised by the ILO are
  - Freedom of Association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining
  - The elimination of forced or compulsory labour
  - The abolition of child labour
  - The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation
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