

Beat: Business

Spanish unions ask for a new social counter adapted to the 21st century

May 1 in Spain

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USPA NEWS - Spain celebrated this Saturday with demonstrations the festival of May 1, International Labor Day. Only in Madrid, four demonstrations called by the unions were authorized, although with reduced attendance due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Just over 4,000 people came to the call of the unions, who demanded a social contract adapted to the reality of the 21st century and highlighted the importance of the ERTE (temporary employment regulation files) put in place due to the pandemic, because have made it possible to reduce unemployment caused by COVID-19.

The two majority unions in Spain, the UGT (General Union of Workers, of socialist inspiration) and the Comisiones Obreras (Workers' Commissions, of communist inspiration), called on Spanish workers to demonstrate in defense of public services and to express their appreciation to all workers who "they have been at the fore" in this pandemic. "Now it's time to comply," affirmed the unions, who demanded that the social-communist Government of Spain implement the pending social agenda and, especially, the completion of the negotiations to repeal the labor reform approved by the conservative Government of the former President Mariano Rajoy in 2012. The unions also demanded a public pension model, the renewal of active employment policies, approve an equal pay law and strengthen the fight against workplace accidents. They did not forget to demand an increase in the Minimum Interprofessional Salary (SMI in its acronym in Spanish), which is currently set at 950 Euros per month.

Seventy Spanish cities hosted demonstrations called by the unions. The demonstrations were developed with great security measures against COVID-19: with masks, maintaining interpersonal distance and avoiding crowds. The unions made "an express call to the responsibility of all" to avoid that the demonstrations were sources of contagion.

The President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sanchez, admitted this Saturday that "there will be no recovery if it does not reach the workers of our country" and assured that he will listen to their demands "with an eye toward ending job insecurity and inequality." Sanchez affirmed on Twitter that "we have to get out of this crisis with decent, stable and transforming jobs." The Spanish President sent his Minister of Labor, Yolanda Diaz, to the main demonstration in Madrid, who pointed out that the crisis caused by the pandemic "has faced us with an outdated labor model" based on job insecurity. "May 1 has never been another day," stressed the Minister of Labor. "Even less this 2021," when it is "a day of hope and shared projects in search of a decent job to build the future."

In the last year and due to the Coronavirus pandemic, 137,500 jobs were destroyed in Spain. In the first quarter of this year, the unemployment rate stood at 15.98% with a rise of 1.58% in the last year. According to the INE (National Institute of Statistics), there are 3,653,900 Spaniards who do not have a job. But the distribution of unemployment is not uniform throughout Spain. The regions of Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha are the ones that create the most jobs and Catalonia and the Canary Islands, the ones that destroy the most jobs. Between January and March, the number of households with all their members unemployed increased by 29,200 to reach a total of 1,226,200. A situation that leaves the third largest economy in the European Union in a vulnerable situation.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com