

## **EMERGENCY MOTION 2**

### **EWL GENERAL ASSEMBLY 27-28 October 2007**

**Date: 26 October 2007**

**The title of emergency motion: Support the teachers strike of the Teachers Unions of Bulgaria.**

---

#### **Organisation proposing the emergency motion**

Name of the organisation: **University Women of Europe**

Name & Email for ongoing contact prior to the GA: Willemijn van der Meer, uwepresident@ifuw.org

#### **Organisations seconding the motion (9):**

1. Name of organisation: NCEWL - Contact person: Liesbeth Sijssling
  2. Name of organisation: EWLBG - Contact person: Iliana Balabanova Stoycheva
  3. Name of organisation: CECIF - Contact person: Grace Wedekind
  4. Name of organisation: Deutscher Frauenrat - Contact person: Brigitte Thiems
  5. Name of organisation: CLEF - Contact person: Monique Halpern
  6. Name of organisation: EFBPW - Contact person: Eufimia Ippolito
  7. Name of organisation: National Coordination of Ireland- Contact person: Therese Murphy
  8. Name of organisation: Swedish Women's Lobby- Contact person: Eva Fager
  9. Name of organisation: Osterreichischer Frauenring- Contact person: Marlene Parenzan
- 

#### **Text of the emergency motion:**

The General Assembly calls on European Women's Lobby to take immediate action in supporting of the Bulgarian Teachers Unions in their call for fair treatment, including better salaries, in view of the importance of education for the future of a country and considering that the majority of the teachers are women. The General Assembly calls the EWL to issue a press release on this motion and to ask all their national coordinations to urge all the member states to write to the Bulgarian Government.

---

#### **Political context:**

The high-school teachers strike (joined by teachers in primary school and kindergarten) was officially announced on Sept 15 – the beginning of the school year in Bulgaria as teachers demanded raise of their salaries. They gave one week waiting period to the Government and as there was no response they went on strike effectively on Sept 24, and it still continues – with 98 % of the teachers participating in the country. The average salary of a Bulgarian teacher is about 170 euros – the lowest payment in the public sector. Though Education is one of the important issues for the future of a country. The majority of the teachers is female.

The bus drivers, mainly men, succeeded after 1 day radical strike in may 2007 to get 450 euros monthly payment. The teachers strike is the longest in the last 18 years of transition. The educational sector is really huge and reforms have been postponed for the last 18 years. The teachers insist that the strike purely economical and professional and have no political goal.

---

#### **What are the financial implications for EWL?**

Lobbying can be done within the current resources of the secretariat, the executive, the board and member organisations.

---

## MAIL TO ALL DELEGATES EWL on OCTOBER 24th

Dear members,

Yesterday evening we met members of the Bulgarian Association of University Women. A lot of Bulgarian women are involved in the teachers strike which lasts 3 weeks already.

We propose to write a support statement during the coming General Assembly.

We did not find time to liaise with the Bulgarian National Delegates yet, but we will contact Liana tomorrow or Friday.

Please find more information on the strike underneath.

We will bring a few interesting books on the Bulgarian Women Movement and their history for sale.

Quote from Kamelia Assenova:

The high-school teachers strike (joined by teachers in primary schools and kindergartens) was officially announced on Sept 15 - the beginning of the school year in Bulgaria as teachers demanded 100% raise of their salaries. They gave one week waiting period to the government and as there was no response they went on strike effectively on Sept 24, and it still continues - with 98 % of the teachers' sector participating in the country. The average salary of a Bulgarian teacher is about 170 Euros - the lowest payment in the public sector - for example bus drivers succeeded after a one-day radical strike in May 2007 to get 450 Euros monthly payment. The strike has been the biggest and longest one in the country in the last 18 years of transition as the educational sector is really huge and reforms have been postponed for the last 18 years. Thus the neglect of education and teachers is not the fault of the current government only - and teachers insist they have no political goals b

ut purely economic and professional demands. The strike has provoked a huge debate in society as virtually every family is affected - kids are out in the streets, not going to school, parents have mixed feelings about the strike as it has disturbed their working schedules over a month but teachers persist. I believe that 100% raise is unrealistic as it will produce a snowball effect in all other public sectors demanding increase in payment but still the government (especially the financial minister and the educational minister have shown - especially in the beginning total indifference and neglect, simply waiting for teachers to give up their demands because they cannot last long without their ridiculously low salaries. But also I believe that the major reason why the government doesn't take the teachers strike seriously is that they have a huge body of women and children at stake in this case, and on top of that intelligent women, who will never act radically such as destroying property, blocking streets etc. Because of the too long duration of the strike the understanding and solidarity with teachers in society is decreasing - negotiations now have been more active with experts and trade union leaders. But any word of support will be of help.

Best regards,

Liesbeth Sijssling (NCEWL)  
Willemijn van der Meer (UWE)