**Turkish government arrests leaders of EPSU affiliates**

**release them now!**

27 November 2018) Early on Monday morning, 26 November, a number of trade unionists were arrested in several cities across Turkey. Among them are leaders of trade unions affiliated to EPSU and PSI – Gönül Erden, co-chair of the SES healthcare union and from the TÜM BEL-SEN municipal services trade union the general secretary Yılmaz Yıldırımcı and chair of the supervisory board, Yusuf Güler. The arrests are linked to activities and meetings, demonstrations and protests that took place in 2016. The government seeks to arbitrarily link this with terrorist activities. Leaders of the HDP opposition party have also been arrested. There will be municipal elections in the first half of 2019 and the action appears to be aimed at intimidating those speaking out against the Turkish government and its policies. The worsening economic situation is having a huge impact on working people and with its actions the government is trying to prevent social opposition to their polices .

The protests and other actions that took place in 2016 were and are legal. The rights to freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom of organisation are laid down in Turkish, European and international law and the Turkish government should respect these. These rights include the freedom for peaceful protests and actions. EPSU demands that the trade unionists are immediately released in the absence of clear charges brought against them. We have written to the European Union institutions to intervene and prevent torture and maltreatment. We will continue to monitor and follow up. Information is still scare.