

# Lithuanians demand a decent life

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Politicians can multiple times discuss economic difficulties, international organizations can make ratings, but if people go out to protest, it means something is going wrong in the state. Such protests took place this month in Lithuania.

Three trade unions hold rally demanding for wage raise in public sector. On October 13, three trade unions held a march and a rally in Vilnius city centre in solidarity with other trade unions protesting in Europe and opposing austerity measures.

Hundreds of people gathered to express dissatisfaction with the Lithuanian government's reforms and demand higher wages and decent working conditions. The event was organized by three associations The Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation (LPSK), the Lithuanian Trade Union "Solidarumas" and the Republican United Trade Union.

The rally participants carried flags of their organizations, as well as posters with the inscriptions: "We want to live, not exist," "Increase, not freeze wages," "Decent work and decent wages."

Earlier, approximately 3,000 teachers across Lithuania took to the streets in protest, bringing the education sector to a standstill. They demand a significant 20% immediate increase in salaries and a further 30% rise from January 2024. Beyond the financial aspect, the teachers' union is advocating for a reduction in classroom sizes and lessening teachers' workload, measures they believe are crucial for enhancing the quality of education in the country.

The Lithuanian Education Workers' Trade Union remains

unsatisfied with the proposed 21% total increase for the next year and continues to push for more substantial amendments. This standoff has fueled discontent among the striking teachers, resulting in classes being disrupted and protests erupting across the country.

The Government has done little to pacify the protesters who continue to demand that their voices be heard and their concerns addressed in a substantial manner.

In an appeal to the President of Lithuania, the Prime Minister of Lithuania and the Speaker of the Seimas, trade unions expressed concerns about low salaries of public sector employees and the growing workload. All these facts caused an acute shortage of teachers, doctors, social workers, officials and cultural workers, especially in the regions.

Participants also protested against an unfair tax system, where the main burden falls on the working people who do not receive affordable services, while people with high incomes avoid proportional taxes. The protesters called on the authorities to adhere to the principle of fairness when reforming the tax system.

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