**18th Meeting of the UNI World Executive Board**

**Nyon, 11-12 November 2015**

**Statement against criminalisation of labour and social protest in Spain**

Labour reform in Spain is resulting in an unprecedented offensive on the rights of workers. Taking place under the pretext of fighting the country’s economic crisis, the true aims of the reforms are to curtail the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining and to privatise public companies.

The results of this offensive are clear to see and include a barely-disguised salary devaluation and a massive shift towards precarious work. Accordingly, labour unrest has increased significantly since 2009, both in the number of strikes and the number of participants, including two general strikes in 2010 and 2012.

The government's response to labour and social protests has been to resort to criminal punishment, with nearly 300 union members facing criminal and administrative sanctioning procedures using an article of the Criminal Code hailing from the Franco dictatorship which was used to suppress strikes during those times.

Court sentences handed to trade union members are disproportionate and typical of the pre-democratic era, such as an eight-year prison sentence demanded for eight Airbus union committee members for their participation in pickets during the General Strike of 2010.

In addition, Spanish workers have faced a campaign by the right wing political and media sectors to defame and discredit trade unions in order to weaken their capacity to defend social and labour rights. Freedom of association and the constitutional right to strike are clearly under threat.

The UNI World Executive Board:

* Awards the UNI Spanish affiliated unions of the CCOO and UGT confederations the UNI Global Union *Freedom from Fear* Award in recognition of their courage in the face of repression and in support of their campaign for justice and an amnesty.
* Rejects the Spanish government’s policy and repressive laws restricting labour rights and citizens' basic freedoms.
* Calls on all UNI Global Union’s affiliates to join the campaign of CCOO and UGT by sending resolutions, letters and emails asking that the charges be dropped against union defendants.