



**UGT CONDEMNS DECLARATIONS BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER  
INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM WAGE IN PORTUGAL IS AN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
IMPERATIVE**

Within the presentation of the so-called "European Semester Autumn Package", Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, responsible for the Employment and Social Affairs Department, made statements warning of the negative impacts that the increase in the minimum wage in Portugal may have in terms of employment.

UGT condemns such statements, which reiterate an idea that the European Commission has already expressed in previous increases in the minimum wage, since we consider that this theory has no basis.

All available data, particularly those submitted to the social partners within the monitoring of the tripartite agreements which have led to such increases, not only do not prove the existence of such risks, as they have firmly denied them.

The increases agreed through social dialogue – with the agreement of UGT, the employers' federations and the Government - have been based on fairness and weighting that have not compromised either the creation of employment or the very pace of the economic growth.

UGT rejects that the European Commission's focus continues to mirror a liberal vision that punishes workers above all and condemns that the spectre of unemployment is used once again to make statements that may condition such discussion, when we are having a discussion on the increase of the minimum wage for 2018.

The minimum wage should not and cannot constitute a mere variable decided on behalf of Holy productivity and competitiveness, this is especially true when it to Portugal whose minimum wage is amongst the lowest in the European Union, being compared only to the countries of Eastern Europe.

UGT should thus reiterate that the future of the country cannot continue to be based on a low wages model and considers it fundamental to be followed the path of sustained valorisation of the minimum wage - proposing 585 euros for 2018 and a minimum of 600 euros for 2019 - in order to ensure that it fulfils an effective social role of protecting the most vulnerable workers, thus fighting the risks of poverty and promoting decent work in Portugal.

UGT will not fail to defend the need to monitor these increases with the involvement of the social partners, according to what the European Commissioner has stated, but believes that Portugal should opt not only for an increase of the minimum wage but also for the increase of the average wages and for a boost in collective bargaining.

UGT should recall at this point the recent adoption at the Gothenburg European Council of the European Pillar for Social Rights, promoted by the President of the European Commission, which intends to make a significant contribution to the strengthening of the social dimension and the promotion of decent work in the European Union, which must necessarily result in the increase of fair wages.

Only in this way will the fight against the deep inequalities that still remain, and to which the European Commission warns, as well as a sustained growth of the economy and of employment, can be promoted.

Lisbon, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017