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Italy

# Prides and workers' struggles in a time of backlash

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**Threats to the rights of women and LGBTI people, gifts to employers, the dismantling of public services and the denial of the right to health: the current period is a source of great concern both for gender minorities and for the Italian proletariat as a whole.**

This year's Pride season in Italy coincides with the rise of reactionary and far-right ideas that pose a real threat to the preservation of the rights of women and LGBTI people and to the conquest of new rights. The blocking of the Zan law against homophobia, the Padua public prosecutor's appeal against the civil registration of the children of homosexual couples and, finally, the annulment by the Milan court of the registration of a child born abroad through surrogate motherhood, all contribute to creating an atmosphere of terror.

## **Prides and struggles to counter the reactionary wave**

Despite this context, seven prides brought together hundreds of thousands of people across the country. The dominant feelings were anger and pride, but also fear for the future. Many same-sex couples no longer plan to spend their lives in Italy.

It's a feeling shared by many sectors of society. On 24 June, a demonstration of 10,000 people took place in the capital to support the call of a broad network of unions, parties and movements against the policies of Meloni's government. Unsurprisingly, the extreme right-wing alliance is protecting employers and intends to pass on the social costs of the crisis to workers and the working classes.

Last Saturday's demonstration was also an opportunity to step up the collection of signatures for the proposed popular initiative on a minimum hourly wage of €10.

## **Demanding the right to health and halting the advance of neoliberal policies**

Another central demand is the defence of public hospitals after decades of reforms that have gradually dismantled public structures and transferred resources to the private sector. According to Agenas (Agenzia per i servizi sanitari regionali), there is a shortage of at least 2,500 specialists in emergency services. The staff shortage affects all services and the resources of the PNR (National Recovery Plan), opening the doors wide to the private sector, which is not leading to an improvement in the situation.

Some people are calling for us to become social partners in the process of mobilising to defend public health.

We need to counter the advance of the private sector, and denounce the scandalous private clauses on supplementary health care included in the collective labour agreements signed by the various categories.

Supplementary health care is a real robbery for workers, who pay three times over: firstly, because the inclusion of

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private supplementary health care serves to keep wages low, among the lowest in Europe; secondly, because supplementary health care is fiscally advantageous for the employer; and thirdly, because it forces those who use it to pay out of their own pockets.

Faced with this situation, the reaction of the trade unions remains timid and does not allow them to engage in a coherent and structural struggle to counter the advance of liberal and reactionary policies.

*27 June 2023*

*PS:*

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