

“Stop squeezing the border-workers”, it’s time to start the collection of signatures

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“**Stop squeezing the border-workers**”. This is the slogan chosen by **Cgil, Cisl, Uil** (Italian trade unions) Acli of Varese (Italian association of Christian workers) and the **Swiss trade unions Unia and Ocst** to protest against the choice of the “Government that, with the National Insurance cut, starting from September 2012, the unemployment special benefit, which they are owned under a State law, reducing the right to a simple ordinary non-agricultural unemployment benefit,” explain the trade union representatives. The organizations started off **a collection of signatures to revise the decision of the Government and to re-establish the right to special benefits**. Moreover some meetings will be called to inform the workers about the ongoing dispute. The two meetings are taking place on 22 November (in the council chamber of Lavena Ponte Tresa’s municipality, at 21) and on 27 November (in the council chamber of Malnate’s municipality, at 21).

The reasons of the protests

The protest of the border-workers broke out after the decision of the Government to reduce the unemployment special benefit of the border-workers to an “ordinary unemployment benefit”. And the difference between them it is notable: “The special benefit for the unemployed border-worker”, explain the trade unions, “are owned for twelve months, while the ordinary benefit only for eight months. Moreover the amount of the special benefit is equal to 50 per cent of the wage earned in Switzerland, while the ordinary benefit is widely lower”.

Who pays the benefits?

The money of the fund to finance the special benefit for the border-workers is paid by

the same workers with the deductions on the wage packet. “We remind the National Insurance agency that the special fund amounted to about 270 million euros and that sum is the exclusive result of the contributions that the border-workers paid during the working activity in Switzerland.”

The “unlucky” fund

It is not the first time that the fund to finance the benefit of the border-workers ends up in heated debates. In 2010 an amendment by the Lega to the Mille Proroghe decree proposed to use 50 per cent of that resource in a different way. Also in that case the trade unions had contested the decision threatening demonstrations and protests and finally the fund remained unchanged.

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