

STARQ - The Portuguese Union for Workers of Archaeology, towards fair, democratic and egalitarian working conditions

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STARQ was created to organize the sectors' workers following fundamental lines:

- Fighting job insecurity
- Building social justice
- The right to work as a fundamental right
- Respect for professional ethics and deontology.

Current working problems in Archeology:

Job insecurity affects around 70% of Portuguese archaeologists.
The workers live in situations of extreme professional and personal instability, facing problems associated with the excessive itinerancy of the profession, such as difficulty in creating family stability, having children and frequently developing physical/mental health problems. A large number of archaeologists abandon the profession after a few years, resulting in a dramatic loss of expertise.

Sector struggles:

- Non-existence of collective employment contracts
- Lack of self-regulation
- In the research sector, archaeologists see themselves in constantly circling through temporary contracts, scholarships and training.

Worker's organization - Why a Union?

- Fight for fair working conditions and organizing workers creating among them a sense of unity/class, helping them to understand their rights and ways of action and struggle
- Negotiation of collective agreements and employment contracts with institutions and private;
- Defense of the public sector, tackling the underfunding affecting the cultural/heritage sectors.
- Capacity for legal action

Actions and Fight:

- Visits to workplaces/archaeological sites; check work conditions; establish a dialogue with the workers
- Meetings with all country archaeologists and at universities
- Election of union delegates to represent the workers
- Establishment of a dialogue with public entities and private companies
- Provide legal defense and counseling to associates
- Intervention in public debates.

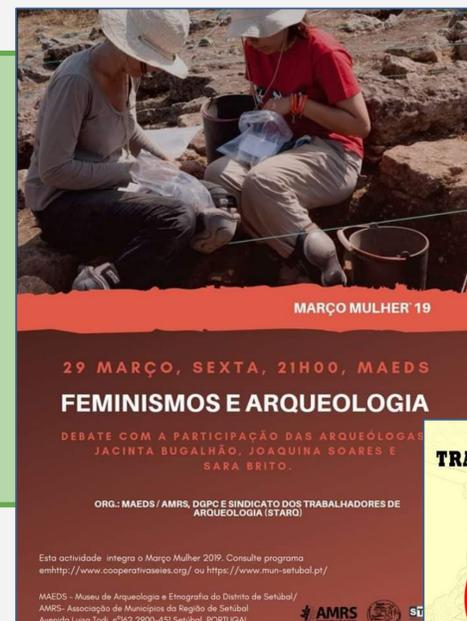
Scope: The Union has a broad scope of action, encompassing the entirety of workers active in the archaeological sector (public workers, company workers, researchers, etc).

Principles: STARQ is independent from the State, Government, political parties, employers or other non-union groups. It exerts a democratic action and is the direct participation of its members that defines its lines of action.

Objetives: aims to uphold the rights of associates and workers, both individually and as a professional group, in accordance with the ethical and deontological principles of the sectors of archaeology and heritage. It also aims to participate in the definition of Portuguese cultural, scientific and educational policies.

Consequences:

- Increment of inequality and disunion among workers
- Decrease of working value and of the social value of archeology
- Halt of scientific production and the advancement of knowledge



Profit cannot drive archaeological activity/heritage management, but capitalism largely transformed them into businesses, conditioning the archaeological activity to the interests of the market, and shaping it into an occupation that should be fast and cheap, all the while using as few human resources as possible. This creates stressful and undignified working conditions, leads to the degradation of the quality of archaeological activity and therefore the knowledge produced. One of the most prominent aspects of the processes involved in the creation/consolidation of the union is the importance of collective experience in its own structuration.

The existence of a union is a fundamental element to bring unity and solidarity between workers, making the archaeological activity healthier and more balanced in its interpersonal relationships.

Class consciousness will lead archaeologists/heritage workers to question the exploitative structures in which they work, it will make us question why we do archaeology and what its purpose is. Class conscience will engage archaeologists through a more critical understanding of the structures in which the activity is maintained, not only leading us to seek out fair, democratic and egalitarian conditions, but also to question our own ethical purposes and issues.