



INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

JOINT STATEMENT OF ITUC and ETUC

TURK-IS, HAK-IS, DISK and KESK

Adopted following the 2nd joint ITUC – ETUC Mission to Turkey on 3-5 May 2017

A joint ITUC and ETUC enlarged delegation visited Ankara between 3 and 5 May 2017.

The aim was, as the International and European trade union movement, to discuss with the four affiliated organisations [Türk-iş, Hak-iş, Disk and KesK] the new developments in the situation of trade union members in Turkey, after a first visit in mid-October 2016.

This time the delegation also included, besides the ITUC and ETUC, representatives from two national confederations – the DGB (Germany) and the TUC (United Kingdom) – as well as international and European branch federations from some of the sectors most affected by the measures (EPSU, public services; ETUCE, teachers; UNI Global, skills and services; and IndustriAll Global, mining, energy and manufacturing).

The delegation reaffirmed its condemnation of any terrorist attacks or unconstitutional efforts to seize power and overthrow democracy.

The international representatives conveyed their particular worries at the massive wave of dismissals of workers, particularly public employees – but also municipal workers notably where trustees have been appointed – by the Turkish government, in most cases based on no evidence or proof, which is not in compliance with the rule of law.

Even if composed of trade unions with some different approaches, the joint delegation shared a common analysis and formulated common demands.

The trade union delegation met representatives of the main political parties, the EU delegation and the ILO office, NGOs and human rights associations, the Turkish Bar Association and the Ministry of Labour.

The delegation, in a first fruitful internal discussion, but also afterwards in the different meetings: recognised that Turkey is facing multiple challenges and threats, but stressed that nine months after the failed coup, the state of emergency and the decrees have gone far beyond what is necessary for security reasons and are disproportionate; that the dismissals and suspensions are destroying the livelihoods of tens of thousands of workers and are becoming a humanitarian problem; that the measures also have an important negative impact on business, investment and jobs; that meanwhile, other key issues for workers and trade unions, such as the much-needed improvement of occupational health and safety, the precarity introduced by some subcontracting and agency working, or the renewal of collective agreements, have been put aside; and finally stressed the importance of social peace, as the basis for the development of a sustainable, inclusive, democratic, secular and stable society.

The delegation reiterated its unconditional support for the democratic values and trade union freedoms set out in ILO conventions, international and European charters, as well as for full respect of the rule of law.

Specific attention must be devoted to the respect and full enforcement of trade union rights in Turkey, including freedom of association, the right to strike and collective bargaining.

In its meetings with the Ministry of Labour and the above-mentioned actors, the joint delegation demanded that the Turkish authorities:

- a) *Put in place the necessary conditions to lift the state of emergency;*
- b) *Stop collective dismissals and suspensions, intimidations and arrests without any basis of evidence/compliance with the rule of law;*
- c) *Call for the release of all the detained workers and public employees, journalists, parliamentarians and elected mayors who are imprisoned without any clear accusation, and this pending trial; ensure access to all others in detention;*
- d) *Revert to normal legislation which implies the presumption of innocence, individuality of criminal responsibility and punishment, and the right to a fair, independent and transparent trial and appeal procedures; return to respect for the rule of law, democracy and justice;*
- e) *Put in place the Inquiry Commission on State of Emergency Measures (decision 23 January) and ensure that the decisions of this Commission are subject to judicial review and possible independent, transparent and effective appeal procedures in a reasonable time, including in the last resort at European level;*
- f) *Immediately redress the grievances of innocent people who have been arrested or suspended, and reinstate them in their jobs;*
- g) *Restore freedom of expression, speech and the media; reopen democratic and independent media and associations;*
- h) *Stop the violation, adopt respect for and implement ILO core labour standards, in particular Conventions 87 and 98 on trade union rights;*
- i) *Urge the parties to engage in constructive dialogue aiming at solving problems.*

The ITUC, ETUC and their members stand together for the fundamental values listed above, and will work with all others to defend and promote these fundamental principles. They will foster further cooperation and intensify their constructive dialogue.

Europe, Turkey and the international community must increase their efforts for the spread of peace, democracy, economic development, equality and decent jobs in all parts of Turkey.

Finally, the delegation asks the EU, the ILO and the Council of Europe to follow up and monitor the implementation of these demands, particularly via the proper and effective involvement of social partners.

Ankara, Friday 5 May 2017.