

João Antonio Felício

President
Président
Präsident
Presidente

Sharan Burrow

General Secretary
Secrétaire générale
Generalsekretärin
Secretaria General

Mr Zoran Zaev

Prime Minister of the Government of the
Republic of Macedonia

By e-mail: info@vlada.gov.mk

Ms Mila Carovska

Minister of Labour and Social Policy of
the Republic of Macedonia

By e-mail: mtsp@mtsp.gov.mk

PERC/AL/pw

Brussels, 29 November 2017

Dear Prime Minister, Dear Minister,

On behalf of the ITUC, which represents 181 million workers in 163 countries and territories and has 340 national affiliates, I would like to express our concerns about interference by the state authorities in trade union affairs and to condemn the dismissal of the President of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Macedonia (KSS), Blagoja Ralповski, from his public service post. Earlier this year, we addressed the government of Macedonia several times and protested against its policies and actions that, in our view, are aimed at both the destabilisation of the previously well-functioning institutionalised social dialogue and the weakening of representative trade union organisations.

The dismissal of Brother Ralповski sends a clear message to all the trade unions of Macedonia that the government is ready to breach the principles of freedom of association and to exercise threats and pressure over trade union leaders and activities, and in the public sector in particular. Furthermore, the KSS informs us about other acts of state interference in trade union affairs, namely about cases of the creation of obstacles in organising regular elections in branch unions, daily pressure and intimidation of members aimed at their resignation from the KSS structures, and arbitrary changes of working places and conditions of union representatives in an attempt at limiting their abilities to perform trade union functions.

Such acts of interference and the dismissal of Brother Ralповski from his public service post are clear violations of the ILO Convention 87 on freedom of association. We have already expressed our concerns about the role of the government in facilitating a leadership crisis in another ITUC affiliate – the Confederation of Trade Unions of Macedonia (CCM) – and about the degradation of the social dialogue in the country. And now the attacks on the KSS confirm the worrying stand that some officials in your government have taken towards the trade union movement in your country.

We urge you to stop any interference in trade union affairs, and to make sure Brother Ralповski is reinstated in his public service function and that all trade unions in Macedonia can exercise their activities in an atmosphere free from pressure, intimidation and provocations. We will inform the ILO and the European Union about this grave situation and will not hesitate to utilise existing international and regional mechanisms of workers' rights protection if the attacks continue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Ralповski', written in a cursive style.

General Secretary

cc: - KSS
- ITUC SEE Office