

Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Macedonia

Program activities of KSS

Skopje, December 2015

1. Introduction

Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Macedonia (KSS) is an organization that is lead by the ideals of democracy, human rights and social justice. KSS will strive to create a trade union movement, that will use all its potentials to build strong, free and democratic labor movement, to improve the living conditions of all workers and their families in a constant struggle to maintain dignity of the employee and to provide social security.

The old principles of trade unionism , such as solidarity and unity are still necessary and they must be re-defined and adjusted to the new political, economic and social circumstances in the sphere of labor, which is under constant changes, expressed at higher risk for those who govern, but also for those whose interests they represent. The modern trade unionism means more chances for the proactive creation of a working environment and creating new jobs, new alluring working places, or in general, creating better working conditions, promoting the concept of decent work as the core of the new union paradigm.

Therefore, striving for these ideas, trade union becomes increasingly social, economic, but also a significant factor in our country, which represents the interests of employees

2. Economic and social position of workers

KSS will actively fight for real and realistic treatment of the workers' labor in all economic and social spheres and aspects. Within its power and union jurisdiction expressed through social dialogue, will always be emphasized the fundamental aim that is valuation of honest, effective and creative work, as an essential part in contribution to economic and business development of the country and the employer.

Through the mechanisms of fiscal and economic policy, KSS will strive to stop further concentration of the portion of income and national wealth that are going in the hands of some citizens and to be allocated between all actors in the labor process especially to the workers. This implies establishing of mechanisms for social balance and integration of marginalized citizens and employees in the labor market, and therefore in society.

Confederation of Free Trade Unions will fight against corruption and the gray economy, which ultimately impoverish workers and is obstacle for further development of the country.

The basic premise of the future action of the KSS is to develop strategy for creating new and productive jobs and reduce unemployment by 15-17 percent on a national level until year 2020.

KSS will strive with all their power to increase the amount of the already determined the minimum wage and to accomplish the employment rights in full volume, particularly within certain sectors and branches.

1. Social Dialogue

Confederation of Free Trade Unions within their program commitments will stand and will require, both on national and local level, actively to participate in the contribution for improvement of the social dialogue. Signing collective agreements at all levels and their implementation is imperative for our work and in the future will not be tolerated cancellation of the collective agreements or not utilization of the same. Also the main future objective of KSS will be maintaining and enhancing the representativeness in the public and private sectors, active participation in the social dialogue at national level by signing the collective agreements in both sectors. Also KSS stands for consistent application of the provisions of the already signed collective agreements at all levels. For this purpose KSS will fight with all available legal means, including solidarity strikes, as a last step.

Confederation of Free Trade Unions through social dialogue will find mechanism for fair and incentive pay for workers where will dominate clear criteria for rewarding the conscientious, efficient and creative work.

Through the establishment of a minimum wage and system for wages according to the collective agreements of branch level as well as on the company level, will be required development of a new system for validation the wages, which is more comprehensive than the agreed minimum.

This will indicate the true values of the workers' labor, the salaries will be paid regularly and we will have real growth in line with the rise of the living cost, increase in labor productivity, profits, and the personal contribution of the employee . On the other hand will be required the pay fees to be treated as a functional part of the wages and the wages to be paid with no exceptions.

Within the framework of social dialogue and tripartism, expressed through participation in economic and social council, KSS primarily will represent: creation of economic environment for real growth of living standards; providing a healthy and safe working conditions, a reduction of gray economy and moonlighting (unreported employment) ; effective management with the unemployment and legal and social protection of workers in case of unemployment; encouraging the development of small and medium enterprises; higher subsidies in agriculture; realization of large infrastructure projects, etc., in order to increase employment and higher incomes of the population; creating tax and benefits system; systematic creation of economic environment for „survival,, of domestic enterprises in international markets through continuous investment in human resources (through formal, informal and applicable education) and economic environment in which investors will not be attracted only by cheap labor, irregular labor and the absence of trade unions, which provide easy profits, but through economic and legal environment, based on the stable and modern industrial relations.

4. Protection of workers' rights

Confederation of Free Trade Unions will take all necessary measures and activities related to the protection of employment rights. These activities will be implemented by insisting on consistent implementation of legal provisions for protection of rights.

KSS will fight the flexible employment laid down in the labor Law to consist provisions that are determined in the international standards and settled by the conventions of labor. It will also require amendment of all legislation that are treating the flexible employment as a market category without including the mechanisms for legal protection.

Through the process of collective bargaining and signing the collective agreements, KSS will especially insist attention to be paid for the issues related for protection of the employment rights of workers.

KSS will achieve legal and operative protection, by strengthening its capacity with further education and training of trade union activists, opening offices for free legal assistance and protection, as well as temporarily or permanently involvement of experts from the labor and legal field for providing legal advice and services.

5. Health and Safety at Work

Confederation of Free Trade Unions will require the legislation for health and safety to be fully applied at work and for that purpose will cooperate with the relevant inspection services.

KSS will promote consistent application of the Health and Safety legislation as well as the large number of regulations adopted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in order to stop the further growth of professional diseases, injuries at work, a number of sick leave etc. ., which are primarily caused by the negligence of employers.

KSS will also actively work to promote the idea for establishment of adequate system for the health and safety at work, which will be infiltrated through legal provisions and will be based on the principle of prevention and accidents at work and professional disease.

KSS will also act in the concept for protection of the dignity of labor and the struggle for decent work, i.e. the employee to be protected from discrimination, sexual harassment and psychological harassment in the workplace (mobbing). This kind of protection will be organized not only as a legal protection but also as a psychological and social support by trained and educated people.

Workers' representatives, in accordance with collective agreements will also have their own responsibilities and commitment to consistently advocate for the implementation of health and safety measures, as well as continuous monitoring of the legislation and carry out regular checks on the Law for Health and Safety and at Work.

In order to achieve system for health and safety, KSS will actively work on educating and informing its members as well as employers.

6. Health care

Health is a fundamental human right and KSS highlights the responsibility and duty of employers in this area.

KSS will constantly indicate that an effective policy in health care cannot be measured only through "savings and restrictions" in the health funds, but to have mechanism for prevention and effective treatment.

KSS considers the health care as a fundamental human right that should not depend of the financial power of the worker.

Therefore, KSS will actively work within their jurisdictions to establish an adequate and equitable system of health insurance and health care.

Health care must be seen as part of a wider system for health and safety protection at work, because health and safety are the fundament of building a healthy and productive society.

7. Pension and Disability Insurance

Through the Economic and Social Council, KSS will seek amendments in the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance Fund in order to improve the conditions for the retirement, with several proposals and conditions i.e. not to be limited only on the age of the employee.

KSS will actively work on development of the system for professional rehabilitation within the disability insurance as a pillar for successful return to work after having the injury or occupational disease at work or work-related.

Within the framework on pension and disability insurance, KSS is committed to continue the reforms for improvement and strengthening the work of the three pension funds. Competitiveness of the pension funds will lead to security of pensions. KSS will continue to resolve the remaining issues related to the unpaid social contributions for pension and disability insurance and solving the problems with the social status of these workers.

8. Organizational measures and activities to increase membership

When making the profile of the organization, KSS will emphasize that the strength of the union is the mass membership. In that sense, KSS will take adequate measures and activities to promote the trade union and to attract new members in order to reinforce the KSS membership.

Confederation will strive for better and more efficient functioning of the regional centers, as well as establishing new where appropriate, with the aim of helping and educating union activists to promote collective bargaining, legal protection,

communication with members and attract new members and other issues of concern to trade unions and their members.

Many employers, regardless whether they are small retailers or multinational companies, forbid their employees to be members of a union.

Confederation of Free Trade Unions in the future will direct all its potential to prevent a violation of the legal provisions and would increase pressure on employers to form trade union organizations. Each organization that forbids establishment of trade union will be punished according to the law.

KSS will also actively support the amendment of the legal framework in order to prevent cases where is prohibited the establishment of the trade union. In the forthcoming period will be undertaken series of activities such a fieldwork and active campaigning for joining the union.

There are newly founded organizations, small or medium businesses, where there is no trade union and despite the increase of the number of employees, they do not have a chance to join.

Confederation of Free Trade Unions in the future will pay particular attention to the employees with time based contracts (short-term) and especially to those who sign the "chain" contracts for a limited period of time.

KSS will try to find a module for appropriate inclusion of these employees in unions and these workers can actively and constructively contribute to the operation and strengthening of union.

KSS will also work on a module to keep the members who lost their jobs and the job seekers to enable them to remain permanently in union solidarity community, and recognize them as potential members of union.

For this purpose KSS will prepare a special platform for inclusion and retention of these persons.

Confederation of Free Trade Unions will be particularly committed to improve the working conditions and equal treatment of persons with disabilities, and for their active involvement in the union.

For that purpose we will support any legislative initiative for introduction of a quota system and equitable employment and this particular category of persons and their additional protection within the employment relationship, and in particular to prevent abuse of rights by employees with disabilities .

Also in the future we will build a special platform for active involvement of women in the trade union movement and the protection and promotion of their rights in terms of equal remuneration and a ban on discrimination.

KSS will increase the special protection of older employees in order to establish additional rights, in particular developing the concept of "lifelong learning" that would maintain their competitiveness in the labor market.

10. Actions of KSS without the influence of politics

Confederation of Free Trade Unions is independent organization that protects the interests of workers - its own members. Therefore KSS will act without influence and domination of the government, employers, and political parties, religious and other ideological groups that aim to weaken the trade union activity. In terms of political parties, KSS will preserve its independence by not concluding election agreements of cooperation with the political parties and avoiding any support to the parties before, during and after the elections the authorities, on a central and on local level.

11. International cooperation

Confederations of Free Trade Unions strongly cherish the idea of international trade unionism and international cooperation. This means that the KSS will continue to cooperate with all democratic trade union organizations around the world in order to exchange trade union experiences in the implementation of internationally recognized labor standards, freedom of trade union association and achieving the right to collective bargaining.

Therefore, KSS will continue to strive for admission to the world's highest trade union associations, or to become a full member.

12. Other activities

Confederation of Free Trade Unions will undertake other activities that are not covered in the program activities and are for the benefits of our members, such as mobilization of all creative and capable potentials in the country for development and unity of the interests of all social strata.

KSS will be a constructive factor in the social partnership in the creation of this policy.

This does not exhaust all the activities for KSS in the period between the Congresses, but it gives open possibility of initiating and seeking ways to address all issues relevant to membership.