

Union protests over wage arrears and staffing levels

(14 August 2015) **The Romanian prison workers' union, SNLP, organised a protest yesterday outside the offices of the national prison service. The union went ahead with the action after the government failed to respond positively to the union's demand to pay eight months of wage arrears and improve working conditions.**

The protest and a union press conference were widely reported in the media. The SNLP has put forward a number of key demands, calling on the government to:

- improve **staffing levels** by hiring 1,000 additional workers; out of a total of 15,500 jobs in the prison system, 3,000 have been vacant for the last eight years;
- compensate for **overtime** with time off from work or extra pay – many staff are overworked and exhausted with some 500,000 additional hours worked across the system;
- pay back all **wage arrears** accrued since 2014; and pay the 100 RON per month wage increase to social and health care workers, as approved by the government in 2014 but not yet paid;
- apply **sanctions** to officials who do not abide by the law with regard to staff numbers and ratios;
- respect the **collective agreement** and take part in real social dialogue - out of a list of 75 issues raised by the trade unions only five have been partially dealt with over the last six months;
- provide **better protection** for employees and their families who are often exposed to aggression;

With no reaction from the government, the union will continue its protests and all prison workers will be wearing black armbands to signify the loss of professional dignity.

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