



Geneva, 26 July 2011

Mr. Faruk Çelik

Minister of Labour and Social Security
Republic of Turkey
İnönü Bulvarı, No. 42
Emek Ankara
Turkey

Re: Repression of trade union rights in the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul

Dear Minister,

We are writing this letter to you on behalf of the ICEM, the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions, based in Geneva, Switzerland, representing more than 20 million workers from 467 trade unions in 132 countries, the PSI, Public Services International, based in Ferney-Voltaire, France, representing more than 20 million public sector workers in some 650 affiliated trade unions from 148 countries and territories, and EPSU, the European Federation of Public Service Unions, representing 8 million public service workers in Europe. Belediye-İş, the Municipal and General Workers' Union of Turkey, is affiliated to all three of our international union federations.

Belediye-İş has informed ICEM, PSI, and EPSU of repression and intimidation towards its members in a series of municipalities. Workers are being intimidated into cancelling their union membership with Belediye-İş, to join another union organization instead. The most recent and bitter example has been ongoing in the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality for some time. A section of Belediye-İş members has been forced to quit the union through untenable behavior and threats exerted by officials of the Municipality. We have recently been informed that when some workers who did leave the union under pressure return to Belediye-İş, they are punished with forced relocation elsewhere inside the municipality. This is especially true for municipality workers in parks, gardens, social facilities and municipal police services. All these practices and tactics are clearly recorded with person names and places. The ICEM, PSI, and EPSU vehemently condemn this unacceptable behavior of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality management.

The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, modified by the 12 September 2010 referendum with the support of your government, does recognize the right and freedom to join a trade union. In addition to this, the United Nations' International Labor Organization's (ILO) Convention No. 87, which has been ratified by the Turkish Government, stipulates that workers' organizations have the right to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their representatives in full freedom, to organize their administration and activities and to formulate their programmes. Furthermore, as a candidate country, Turkey is required to fulfill all of the regulations of the EU, which includes full respect for union rights.



Under these circumstances, we urge you to use your authority over the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality to stop all the methods and means used against Belediye-İş members to resign their membership. The ICEM, PSI, and EPSU, together with their affiliated trade unions continue to closely watch this situation within the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul.

I anticipate your kind attention and reply.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manfred Warda'.

Manfred Warda
General Secretary of ICEM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Waldorff'.

Peter Waldorff
General Secretary of PSI

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carola Fischbach-Pyttel'.

Carola Fischbach-Pyttel
General Secretary of EPSU

CC: **Nihat Yurdakul**, *President of Belediye-İş*