



Mr. Safet Softić, predsjedavajući  
Parlament Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine  
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Contact person: Jan Willem Goudriaan

Dear Mr. Softić,

EPSU has received information that the Government of the Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina has sent a proposal to the Parliament for a so-called Intervention law which would determine salaries and other benefits for those workers that are employed in the Institutions of the Federation BiH, in cantons, cities and boroughs. Other workers affected are those employed in institutions financed by the budget funds and the Road Directorates. The proposal for the law is a reaction to demands of the International Monetary Fund. The proposals of the IMF will slash many government agencies and have a very negative impact on the workers. Pension funds, health assurances and benefits to war veterans and invalids are equally affected.

We are concerned that the government of the Federation did not consult the trade unions (Confederation of Trade Unions from BiH – CTUBIH). The government did not seek out the opinion despite the fact that the law has such detrimental consequences for many workers.

Your government violates several international standards such as those of the ILO (Conventions Nr 98 and 144) and European Social Charter of the Council of Europe (article 6.). Also your national labour law, the general collective agreement for the territory of the Federation BIH, the collective agreements and the agreement regarding the Social Economic Council for the territory of the Federation (article 4, item 1, indents 4 and 6.) have not been respected. The government further ignores the social agreement signed between you and the social partners for the period 2009-2010.

We are further concerned that you do not respect the basic principles of the European Social Model of the European Union which is based on information and consultation, on participation, on social dialogue and on collective bargaining, all recognized as Fundamental Rights of workers and their trade unions.

It appears your government has called this an emergency, evoking a constitutional basis which would allow you to introduce this law. This appears far-fetched and designed to rule out consultation and dialogue. And it makes this law one that deprives workers of their rights.

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That comes close to the introduction of authoritarian rule and violates the core value of the European Union – the participatory and democratic principle.

We point out that governments in other countries faced with a similar situation have been able to consult and dialogue with the trade unions, often finding common solutions. If your government is not able to organize such a dialogue, this would be a sign of incompetence.

It might be the case that your government has been pressurized to forsake consultation by the IMF. Press reports suggest that the IMF argues only its proposals can be adopted or otherwise your government will not obtain the funds. If that is the case I am sure the CTUBIH and EPSU will join you in demanding that the IMF proposals are considered thoroughly by you, by the social partners and other actors in the Federation.

We call on you to organize the dialogue and negotiations with the trade unions, and the social partners, to arrive at an agreement which will receive more support and has therefore a better chance of pulling the Federation of BiH out of the many economic difficulties that do exist. Trade unions have been constructive and do understand the need for long-term stability. It will provide a better foundation also of obtaining the Standby Agreement of the IMF.

EPSU will monitor the conflict closely and also inform the relevant authorities of the European Union.

We look forward to a positive attitude of your government and a constructive dialogue with the trade unions,

Yours sincerely,

Jan Willem Goudriaan  
EPSU Deputy General Secretary

cc.

- EU High Representative
- EU Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs
- EU Commissioner for Enlargement

*EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions organizing workers in local and regional government, national administration, health and social services and utilities (energy, water, waste). EPSU is a member of the ETUC and is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI), the global union federation organizing workers in the same sectors.*