

To Prime Minister

Email: bprm@kprm.gov.pl

Ref:JWG/se

Brussels, 24 April 2020

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to you on behalf of EPSU, the European Federation of Public Service Unions, representing over eight million civil servants and other public servants across 50 countries, including Poland.

We are extremely concerned about the anti-COVID-19 Shield Two Act both in terms of its content and the way that it was rushed through the parliamentary process without proper consultation with the trade unions.

We are aware that no state of emergency has been declared in Poland and so can see no reason why government cannot apply the normal legislative procedure, involving the social partners and within the usual statutory deadlines.

It is therefore, of major concern that legislation with such serious implications for civil servants and other workers in public administration went through both chambers of the Parliament, at maximum speed and without any debate or consultation with social partners.

Furthermore, we are alarmed that parts of the Labour Code and the law on collective redundancies won't apply in the event of regulations being issued under Shield Two to reduce personnel costs in the civil service and other parts of the public administration. We understand that trade unions will simply be informed of the proposed cut and given seven days to express an opinion.

It is simply unacceptable to implement cuts in jobs and pay and conditions in this way. As a country that has ratified ILO Convention 151 you should be aware of the importance of collective bargaining and social dialogue in the public services. The 2013 ILO report on 151 further underlined the importance of collective bargaining and social dialogue in time of economic crisis.

In many countries across Europe, including Italy, a country far worse affected by COVID-19 than Poland, the trade unions in public administration have been involved in the

emergency response, negotiating agreements with the government to help tackle the crisis. There is no reason why public sector trade unions in Poland should not be able to act in the same way.

Not only this but civil servants have had their remuneration frozen for many years and find themselves potentially paying the price of the crisis while support measures are afforded to the self-employed and persons under civil law contracts, who have contributed to social security and other public funds in a very limited way.

We support the Polish unions in their strong opposition to this legislation and their calls for its withdrawal.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary