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Ms Zehra Zümrüt SELÇUK

Minister of Family, Labour and Social Services
Republic of Turkey
Inonu Bulvari No 42
06520 Emek
Ankara Turkey

1st August 2019

Dear Minister

The ITUC, which represents more than 207 million workers through its 331 affiliated organisations in 163 countries and territories, urges your government to desist from interference in the internal affairs of the Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK), an ITUC affiliate.

We were informed that the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services has refused to allow Mr Mehmet Bozgeyik and Ms Aysun Gezen – KESK Co-Presidents – to represent the Confederation in the upcoming collective bargaining agreement negotiations on the grounds that they have been dismissed from the public services.

Turkey has ratified International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 87 on freedom of association, which explicitly stipulates that every worker has the right to establish and join the organisation of his own choosing. Article 3 of Convention 87 states that "workers' and employers' organisations shall have the right to draw up their constitutions and rules" and that "the public authorities shall refrain from any interference which would restrict this right or impede the lawful exercise thereof".

Furthermore, we would like to draw your attention to the discussion that took place in June this year at the Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) of the ILO examining the application of Convention 87 by Turkey. During that session, your government was repeatedly urged to follow the recommendations of the ILO Committee of Experts (CEACR) regarding excessive interference in trade union activities by public authorities contrary to Article 3 of Convention 87.

The ITUC once again expresses its grave concern with the systematic violations of trade union rights in Turkey, contrary to the commitments your government has made at the international level. We look forward to receiving your confirmation that KESK will be able to nominate whomsoever it decides to negotiate on behalf of its members.

Yours sincerely,



General Secretary