Mr Dimitar Kovachevski
President of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia
Skopje, North Macedonia
e-mail: info@vlada.gov.mk

12 May 2023

Amendments to legislation in violation of labour standards

Dear Mr Kovachevski

We are writing to express our concerns about your government's proposals to change labour legislation by a fast-track procedure without due consultation with social partners. We have been alerted to this by our North Macedonian affiliates and our position is in strong support of the letter to you from the International Trade Union Confederation, dated 27 April.

EPSU has lobbied and campaigned strongly over many years to defend the Working Time Directive and to ensure that it is properly transposed and enforced across Europe. This is crucial for many of our members who deliver vital emergency and other public services. It is therefore of major of concern to us that the labour reform proposals would allow employers to circumvent working time regulations and lead to working time of 60 hours a week.

Excessive working hours pose a serious threat to health and safety and ensuring the delivery of safe and good quality public services. The ITUC has already pointed out how the proposals fly in the face of international labour standards. We would further stress that as a Candidate Country, North Macedonia should be ensuring it complies with the EU's social acquis and, as you know, the Working Time Directive is absolutely central to this.

We join with the ITUC in calling on the Government of North Macedonia to withdraw this initiative and engage fully with the social partners on any planned revision of labour legislation. We will be following the situation closely in consultation with our affiliates in North Macedonia and look forward to a positive response from you on these critical issues.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary