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**President
Republic of Belarus
Alexander Lukashenko
220016, Minsk, K. Marx St. 38
+375-17-222-3217,
Fax: +375-17-226-0610,
via email: contact@president.gov.by**

**Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus
Sergey Rumas
220010, Республика Беларусь, г. Минск, ул. Советская, 11
(Дом Правительства)
Fax: (017) 222-66-65
via email: press@government.by**

**Copy
Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Belarus
Vladimir Makei
via email: mail@mfa.gov.by**

**INDUSTRIALL GLOBAL UNION AND
THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
DEMAND FULL ACQUITTAL OF
GENNADY FEDYINCH AND IHAR KOMLIK**

Dear Mr. President,

We are addressing you on behalf of [IndustriALL Global Union](#) and the [International Trade Union Confederation](#) (ITUC) in connection with the recent trial in Minsk against the leaders of the Belarusian Radio and Electronics Industry Workers' Union (REP) Gennady Fedynich and Ihar Komlik. Despite the fact that according to the defence lawyers and observers from IndustriALL, no reliable or legally-obtained evidence was presented in the case during the trial of the "trade union case", the Court of the district Sovetsky of Minsk found both leaders guilty of tax evasion, imposed a fine on them amounting to BYN 47'560, a four-year long restriction of freedom with suspended incarceration, and a ban on holding senior positions for 5 years.

IndustriALL and ITUC strongly condemn this court decision, which was politically motivated. We believe the court ruling seeks to exert pressure on the trade union's leadership to undermine the activities of the trade union and prevent its active participation in society.

Thus, the verdict issued by the court against Gennady Fedynich and Ihar Komlik, is a violation of human rights and freedom of association, in contravention of national legislation and against Belarus' international obligations.

Unfortunately, this verdict creates a dangerous precedent for prosecuting on implausible grounds any trade union organization and their leaders, who are engaged in protecting the social and economic interests of the working people in the Republic of Belarus.

Furthermore, IndustriALL and ITUC find it unacceptable that during the trial process, references were constantly made to the cooperation of the trade union REP with foreign and international trade unions. The prosecutors presented this fact, and the judge took it into account as an additional proof of guilt of the trade unions leaders.

We wish to draw your attention to the fact that the existence of international relations within any trade union is a normal practice in all civilized countries of the world. In accordance with articles 5 and 6 of ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise which was ratified by the Republic of Belarus, the government does not have the right to interfere in the implementation of the rights of workers' organizations to join international organizations, part of which is to pay membership fees or receive international financial assistance.

In consequence, the illegitimate use of the legal system and its ensuing court verdict represent clear interference in the internal affairs of trade unions, which is a grave violation of ILO Convention 87.

Mr President, IndustriALL and ITUC appeal to you, as a guarantor of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and demand to put an end to the persecution of independent trade unions in Belarus. IndustriALL and ITUC call for the immediate review of the verdict against Gennady Fedynich and Ihar Komlik, which should result in their full and unconditional acquittal.

As long as the verdict remains in force and in light of the severe restriction of freedom, which will negatively affect the normal working and living conditions of both leaders, we consider Fedynich and Komlik as political prisoners. The existence of political prisoners is a blatant violation of the recent commitment of Belarus vis-a-vis the European Union. IndustriALL and ITUC are going to report this fact to all EU and other intergovernmental structures concerned.

Finally, IndustriALL and ITUC urge you to bring the national legislation of the Republic of Belarus in line with the country's international obligations and, in particular, fully implement the recommendations of the ILO Commission of Inquiry of 2004, and eventually repeal Decree No. 5, which served the grounds for initiation of the "trade union case" and gives ample possibilities to manipulate workers' rights in the country, further criminalizing trade union activities.

We anticipate your swift action, and immediate reply.

Yours faithfully,



Valter Sanches
General Secretary
IndustriALL Global Union



Sharan Burrow
General Secretary
International Trade Union Confederation