

Mr Zoran Milanovic
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PERC/GG

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Croatian Labour Legislation

Dear Prime Minister,

We are addressing you to express our deep concern over the decision to submit the draft proposal of the new labour law to Parliament which will enter the procedure with the first reading in the next few days. The decision is all the more surprising as a draft which already gave rise to protests in view of the obvious lack of respect for the opinions of the trade unions and social dialogue obligations and which was postponed at the end of 2013 is now re-launched in total disregard for any consultations, proper exchange of views on sound and objective analysis and relevant assessment of the possible impacts on the complicated situation in the country. In that line, the invitation of the Minister of Labour to discuss a draft already in procedure in Parliament adds further bitterness in a row of acts that cannot be interpreted in other ways but as intentional marginalisation of the trade unions and discrediting social dialogue as a recognised tool for building public consensus and guiding policy orientation, especially in difficult times.

We fully share the concerns of the Croatian trade unions that the adoption of the draft in its current form and content would have a serious negative impact on the development of efficient employment policy and labour relations. It would lead to the drastic deterioration of the working and living conditions of Croatian citizens, deepening inequalities and thus undermining the basis for the future of the economy and society that your government is trying to offer to the people. As Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund clearly defined it recently, inequality “harms the pace and sustainability of growth over the longer term” and “leads to an economy of exclusion, and a wasteland of discarded potential”.

We would also like to underline our full support for the legitimate demands of the Croatian trade unions and their protest actions in the attempt to draw the Government's attention to the gravity of the situation, the need to abandon its current intransigent approach and proceed with genuine and efficient social dialogue.

To these ends we do believe there are good chances to enable that shift and to open the way for solutions based on consensus and realistic perspectives for positive effects in the future. The first steps obviously go through withdrawing the current draft from Parliament and restarting the social dialogue procedures in order to avoid unnecessary tensions and conflicts in society.

Yours sincerely



Sharan Burrow
General Secretary
ITUC



Bernadette Ségol
General Secretary
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