

João Antonio Felicio

President
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Sharan Burrow

General Secretary
Secrétaire générale
Generalsekretärin
Secretaria General

Mr Milan Bandić
Mayor of the City of Zagreb
Zagreb
Croatia

By e-mail: kabinet@zagreb.hr

PERC/AL/pw

Brussels, 17 May 2016

Dear Mr Bandić,

On behalf of the ITUC, the largest global trade union organisation that represents 180 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 333 national affiliates, I would like to raise our concerns about the pressure and intimidation of members of the Trade Union of Education, Media and Culture (SOMK). We have been informed by the UATUC, our affiliated organisation, that the Zagreb city municipal authorities exercise retaliation actions against preschool teachers and workers who took part in the “Daj 5 za DPS” demonstration that SOMK organised on 5 May. At this action, the protesters demanded better working conditions in preschools, respect for state pedagogical standard, and urgent development of a plan to develop a kindergarten network in Zagreb. More than 1000 workers joined the rally which also had enormous public support.

Freedom of association, Freedom of assembly and freedom of speech are fundamental rights and the cornerstone of any democracy. It is astonishing that instead of discussing the demands and eventually addressing the reasons of the protests the municipal authorities turn to actions that are in direct violation of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution as well as the international conventions that Croatia has ratified.

We therefore urge you to intervene to make sure that any pressure on workers who took part in the lawful protest action is immediately stopped, that the right of workers of kindergartens to join a union of their choice is fully respected and that concerns and demands expressed by the protesters at the 5 May rally are considered and decent solutions are found in dialogue with SOMK.

The actions against SOMK members represent a clear violation of ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association, and the ITUC would be ready to direct the issue to the ILO supervisory mechanisms, to support a formal complaint or to use any other means available at international level if the pressure and intimidation continue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. R.', written in a cursive style.

General Secretary

cc: - SOMK
- UATUC