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ETUCE

European Trade Union Committee for Education

EI European Region

To:

Mr. Bakir Izetbegović

Chairman

Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Via email only

premijer@fbihvlada.gov.ba

Brussels, 9 June 2016

MR/AKR/9837

Subject: The current repressive measures against the primary education union in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH)

Mr. Chairman,

With this letter, ETUCE expresses strong solidarity with its member organisation, the Independent Trade Union of Primary Schools Education of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SSOOiO FBiH).

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 131 Teacher Unions and 11 million teachers in 48 countries of Europe. ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at the EU level and a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is the European Region of Education International, the global federation of teacher unions.

On 24 May 2016 according to SSOOiO FBiH, the Federal Ministry of Justice issued a decision on the union's deletion from the so-called Registry of Association. We understand from our member organisation that they could not consider such an operation at that stage as they had not received any specific notice prior to that decision.

Given that Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified *ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise*, we must of course now draw your attention to our negative conclusion that the described process would constitute clearly a grave and unacceptable violation of the ratified Convention.

It is more than worrying that Bosnia and Herzegovina that has just recently submitted its application for membership in the European Union, needs apparently no longer than a couple of months to show such disrespect to a very essential element of the European social model which actually is the social dialogue.

It is easy to recognize that the cancellation of the SSOiO FBiH's registration intends not only to wipe out this union. In fact, this step and the apparently announced deletion of other trade unions poses a threat to the entire trade union movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina and thus to the collective bargaining system through social dialogue.

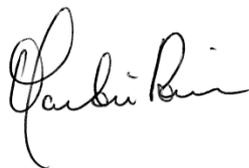
We would therefore like to explain to you that we regard the recent decision not only as an attack on existing rights but also – in case of EU access of Bosnia and Herzegovina – as a threat to some established core values within the European Union which we will strongly defend. Namely, the SSOiO FBiH is not only ETUCE's member organisation but also the possible future delegate for Bosnia and Herzegovina in the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education.

This is why we urge you to pay intensive attention to the current developments which pose a serious threat to democracy and the safeguard of human and trade union rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina and do your utmost to help solving this intolerable situation. We sincerely hope that you will still respond to the concerns raised and turn the process into the right direction that can satisfy everyone concerned by this issue.

In essence, I urge you to introduce an immediate reverse of this damaging decision so we would not be forced to forward a request for urgent intervention to the International Labour Organisation (ILO). At the same time, we recommend that the education social partners gather around the negotiation table and start engaging in a constructive social dialogue towards real solutions. We will keep monitoring the situation and support our member organisation in its efforts to revitalise and to strengthen social dialogue for the best of the teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you for with urgent and immediate answer.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Rømer', written in a cursive style.

Martin Rømer
European Director, ETUCE