

Dear editor

While fully respecting the editorial freedom of Magyar Nemzet, we are shocked at the publication of the article as 'the left has targeted workers by trade unions too' (6 April 2019) as a 'news' article.

What possible reason is there to base a news article on trade unions and social dialogue on the views of a "secret service expert"?

What justification is there for suggesting that ETUC and MASZSZ are "Communist-class warrior-rooted" unions? In reality the ETUC is a confederation bringing together unions from many traditions including social democratic, Christian and Liberal. In Hungary ETUC has five affiliates with different traditions, the Értelmiségi Szakszervezeti Szövetség, the Független Szakszervezetek Demokratikus Ligája, the Magyar Szakszervezeti Szövetség, a Munkástanácsok Országos Szövetsége, the Magyar Szakszervezeti Szövetség and the Szakszervezetek Együttműködési Fóruma. ETUC has had constructive dialogue also with the Hungarian government, despite different opinions on some topics.

When exactly did the "classical trade union role" of being involved in politics "cease" as your "secret service expert" claims? And why would it? Did that opinion not make you suspicious that your so-called expert knew nothing about trade unions? We are involved in politics – for example in discussion about employment law and social policies – because of its impact on workers' lives. This role has not ceased and will not stop in a democratic society. Absence of trade union involvement in the political system, for example in social dialogue in Hungary, leads only to problems.

This leads us to the next question - what truth is Magyar Nemzet sharing with its readers when it publishes the absurd opinion that Governments should engage in social dialogue only with employers and not trade unions "because we are not living in socialism"? The very meaning of social dialogue is negotiation with employers AND trade unions and is considered normal in many countries including Germany and Sweden that are among the most successful free-market economies in the world.

Why does your paper publish an obviously false claim by your "secret services expert" that we want to invite cheap labour, and that confuses immigration with cheap labour? Low wages are the result of bad employers – not caused by migrant workers! Migrants present in Europe do need to be integrated into the labour market so that they contribute to society and pay taxes. We campaign for workers to be able to make a living in their home countries and not to be forced leave for economic reasons, and to be employed on the basis of equal pay precisely to avoid being exploited as cheap labour.

Yours sincerely

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