

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission
Charles Michel
President of the European Council

CC: Matti Maasikas
Head of Delegation of the EU to
Ukraine

Letter sent by email
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CC: matti.maasikas@eeas.europa.eu

Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear President Michel,

We have been informed that President Zelenskyy has signed into life the bill 5371 on Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts regarding Simplification of Labour Relations Regulations for Small and Medium Business, despite the call we made to veto it.

Ukraine will need unity for national reconstruction built on respect for labour rights and social dialogue as the basis for a new industrial and employment policy and therefore the necessary relaunch of the industrial relations of the country, including a comprehensive revision of labour legislation. The adoption of this highly controversial piece of legislation will not contribute to the realization of that goal, on the contrary, it will undermine it. Furthermore, the emergency law “On legal regime of martial law” already greatly restricts workers’ rights. The application of the bill 5371, however, will cause irreparable damage to the industrial relations in the country.

On several occasions we have communicated our concerns to the Ukrainian authorities and the EU institutions. The bill will destroy the collective rights which are the core of the EU social model, and it is contrary to the EU Acquis including the principles of non-discrimination and social dialogue. It will deny labour protections and collective rights to workers of organisations with less than 250 employees, will create two-tier labour market and establish incentives for employers to split organisations into smaller legal entities at the expense of workers’ and trade union rights.

This law is a new stage in the persistent attack on trade unions of Ukraine, motivated by oligarchs behind the ruling party, and others, who do not care for the interests of the people. Not only do they push for anti-social legislation, orchestrate defamation campaigns and abuse by investigative powers against trade union leaders, interfere in trade union activities, and promote attempts to seize trade union properties that are used today to shelter thousands of internal refugees that the international and European trade union movement support nowadays.

The EU must not stay silent about these actions and we expect clear and unequivocal condemnation of these repeated acts which are hostile to EU values and principles. We will use any formal procedures that our Ukrainian colleagues initiate – within the ILO, the

Council of Europe or EU-Ukraine institutions – to protect the rights of Ukrainian workers who have to fight on two fronts – against the Russian army and against local politicians and oligarchs.

We urge you to intervene with President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian authorities to remind them, in the framework of the EU accession process, that this legislation goes against EU and international rules and has therefore to be reconsidered.

Yours sincerely



Luca Visentini
ETUC and PERC General Secretary



Sharan Burrow
ITUC General Secretary