



DİSK-KESK-TMMOB-TTB call on authorities to respond to the public needs and to meet people's demands!

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which is prevalent in the world, has caused high mortality in many parts of the world and, to some extent, can be considered a weapon of mass destruction now. In the light of the situation in many countries, it is observed that the uncertainty is still dominant across the world. With regard to the situation in our country, we are concerned about the way, e.g. taking appropriate actions and necessary measurements, the Government deals with the COVID-19.

The following decisions and measures caused loss of public trust in Government's policies: the Government did cancel flights from/to China and Iran even after the Coronavirus outbreak in these countries, allowing citizens to go to Umrah, in Makkah, and no strict quarantine for those who returned from the Umrah, not being transparent about statistics on confirmed and suspected cases.

As a result of the problem of trust in the Government's announcement and information, the public focused on flow of information on social media. Yet, the focus on social media made the situation more complicated and people got confused, misinformation, disinformation and unconfirmed information caused chaos and caused panic among the society.

First of all, the fight against the outbreak should be based on a collective plan of action. As long as the approach to the outbreak depends on the future of political power and economic loss and gain, the whole country's "immunity" suffers from the damage.

We, as the trade unions, labour organizations and professional chambers that were not invited to the the "Coordination Meeting about the Fight against Coronavirus" in Cankaya Place on 18 March 2020, would like to state that social destruction, discriminatory and polarizing approaches are getting deepened gradually and they pose a serious threats to the public health and the country.

The President's statement did not restore the confidence in the society. On the contrary, it has inspired the confidence in capitalists and employers only. As a result, the public-namely workers, unemployed, tradesmen, and the victims of the outbreak- lost its trust in the Government.

It is obvious that we are facing a crisis resulting from a neoliberal mentality that privatizes the health sector *and* prevents the public from benefiting from free, accessible and quality health services. The only way to exit from this crisis is to improve solidarity among citizens.

We, as the undersigned organizations namely DİSK, KESK, TMMOB and TTB, are fully aware of the fact that we have certain responsibilities to our members and the society. In this respect, we call on the authorities to pay attention to the following recommendations:

- 1. The outbreak has demonstrated the importance of science, education and health. The Government should attribute more attention to these areas. We would like to thank the health officers for their immense efforts in spite of the limited and poor conditions. We ask public authorities to take all required actions to keep their spirit and morale high and provide all opportunities to them.**
- 2. Action plans should be made by taking the worst case scenarios into consideration. we should examine the situation in other countries and**

- be ready for a worse crisis. In this respect, all facilities (e.g. institutions, vehicles, and equipment) should be ready to be used during the crisis.
3. Working from home or remote should be applied to all possible workplaces. All workers should be on paid leave unless they work for urgently needed sectors and all required hygiene and protection conditions for virus are met.
 4. One of the parents as well as those who are older than 60 years old and/or belong to one of the risk groups should be on paid leave with no further delay even if they work for urgently needed sectors. Health conditions for all workers should be maximized.
 5. The lowest pension should be equal to the minimum wage. Besides, an additional 1000 TL payment should be made to these groups of the society during the combat against coronavirus.
 6. Terminating contracts be it for individuals and in a collective manner should be prohibited both in public and private sectors.
 7. In order to prevent opportunists, who increase prices in an unfair manner, audits of sectors and workplaces should be carefully carried out. Sanctions should be imposed on such sectors and workplaces by relevant authorities.
 8. People with lower income should be able benefit from public funds for basic food and hygiene. Protective goods and tools (e.g. masks, cologne, soap) should be distributed as free of charge to everyone in particular citizens with low income.
 9. Maximum measurements should be taken for places where people come together. In this respect, there is need for a special attention to removal centers. It is essential to protect the health of refugees and immigrants. Public funds should be allocated also to other refugees and immigrants, who are not in removal centers but with low income, so that they can access to basic food and hygiene kits.
 10. Considering the fact that there is a risk of increase in unemployment in parallel with negative trends and deterioration in economic situation, criteria for payment from the budget for unemployed people should be reviewed by the Government. It should be easier to apply and benefit

from this fund. More specifically, the current criterion requires people to work for 600 days to be eligible for this payment. It should be decreased to 90 days during the outbreak. Those who currently benefit from this payment should continue to receive it during the crisis.

11. Mortgages, loans for cars or other individual purposes and credit card debts as well as electricity, water, natural gas and communication bills should be postponed during the outbreak crisis.
12. Access to health should be free during the COVID-19 outbreak.
13. Health institutions should be equipped with required tools and test kits so that tests can be applied to all suspected cases for COVID-19.
14. During the outbreak, private health institutions should be taken over by the public administration.
15. Under the leadership of municipalities and mukhtars, crisis committees should be set up at the local level. These committees should be composed of the representatives of civil society organizations, chambers and trade unions.
16. According to a statement from the Ministry of Justice, there are 294.000 convicted and detainees in 355 prisons in the country. Furthermore, 11.000 of these people are women. It should be noted that there are 3100 children in prisons and 780 children stay in prisons with their mothers. There are some countries that released people from prisons yet our government works on a draft that excludes convicts and detainees for political cases. Such a discriminatory approach is unacceptable. It is a clear fact that opponent journalists, academics, intellectuals, members of parliaments, mayors, lawyers, students, trade union executives and members are labeled as “terrorists” and were detained by the courts in recent years. Therefore, those who are in pre-trial detention should be released immediately; detained and convicted citizens for political issues, journalists, elderly people, ill prisoners and children should be released or the execution of their sentences should be postponed. It is necessary for the right to life and freedom of expression.

17. Applause for health officers is not enough. Protection measures should be improved and additional payments should be made to the health officers.

It is certain that it is a historical and urgent obligation for us to warn. We, as the undersigned organizations namely DİSK, KESK, TMMOB and TTB, feel that we are obliged to warn the Government about its policies. We remind that pray and cologne are not enough to overcome the pandemic. We would like to underline that there is a need for solidarity and actions based on scientific principles. We call on authorities to take concrete actions before it is too late.

Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK),

Confederation of Public Employees Trade Unions (KESK),

The Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB),

Turkish Medical Association (TTB)