



LITHUANIAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Lithuanian employers seek suspension of important labour rights

Employers' organizations, belonging to the Tripartite Council of the Republic of Lithuania, presented their suggestions (without any previous consultations with trade unions) to suspend a part of significant workers' rights due to the introduced quarantine in the country. The Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation (LPSK) sees it as a cynical and selfish try to shift the common burden to workers. The Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation is strongly against it.

Their suggestions for changing the Labour Code provisions at least for 6 months include:

- to suspend forfeitures for workers when payments are late and to leave valid only the provision on the interest of late payments (*article 147*);
- to set a principle that all employees, irrespective of the length of service, would be warned only 14 days before terminating their employment agreements (*article 57*);
- to renounce payments of 2 months salaries worth severance compensations when employees are fired (*article 57*)// *Alternative suggestion*: to leave this provision valid but in that case, all severance compensations should be financed from the Long-term job benefit fund (*lt. Ilgalaikio darbo išmokų fondas*) or by other financial means provided by the state;
- to give a right to employers to change work functions of their employees **unilaterally** (salaries would stay the same); employers' organizations state that this change would give them an opportunity to assign alternative tasks instead of announcing downtimes (*article 45*);
- to permit that a workday could reach 12 hours (agreements on additional work or ordinary overtime are not included) and the workweek could be extended to 48 hours on average;
- to reduce current restrictions for signing fixed-term contracts;
- to set that the new summarized working time accounting period would be 6 months (with some exceptions);

- to permit employers to force their employees to take a vacation (their agreement would not be needed); these employees would be warned only 3 days before;
- to suspend the duty of employers to pay a severance compensation, if an employee terminates his/her work agreement during a downtime period (*article 56*) // *Alternative suggestion*: to leave this provision valid but in that case compensations should be financed from the Long-term job benefit fund or by other financial means provided by the state;
- to lengthen a pay period to settle with a fired employee to 30 days (*article 146*).

The Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation stresses that solidarity and goodwill among social partners are needed to tackle the current crisis successfully. Unfortunately, this kind of behavior of employers shows that they are keen to minimize their potential losses at any cost, i. e. without considering potential long-term damage to society.

Trade unions understand that financially painful decisions will be taken, but they have to be discussed beforehand among representatives of employees and employers and not be pushed unilaterally.