



HAK-İŞ

HAK İŞÇİ SENDİKALARI KONFEDERASYONU
HAK-İŞ TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

Mr. Luca Visentini
General Secretary
ETUC
Belgium

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Subject: HAK-IS Confederation Report On Latest Updates In Turkey Regarding Covid-19 Outbreak

Dear Mr. Visentini,

We would like to inform you about the latest updates in Turkey regarding COVID-19 outbreak.

Latest Updates

- ✓ Turkey is one of the example countries when it comes to social aid, welfare work and outreach with the help of a great national solidarity. With this principal, Turkey has started a "National Solidarity Campaign" which aims to provide additional support to low-income workers who are suffering financially due to measures taken against the spread of the disease. As part of this campaign, 1.9 billion TL has been raised so far which is about to be distributed to those in need. This initiative has been taken to increase the solidarity spirit of the nation, which is needed mentally nowadays.
- ✓ Short Work Allowance will be paid to the workers in accordance with the employers' declaration, without waiting for the completion of the eligibility determination. Excess and improper payments made due to the employer's providing incorrect information and documents will be collected from the employer with its legal interest.
- ✓ More than 3 million workers and more than 300 thousand companies applied for Short Term Work Allowance.
- ✓ According to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Law on the Reduction of the Effects of the Epidemic on Economic and Social Life, monthly cash support will be provided while prohibiting employers to fire workers for 3 months. Employers will be able to leave employees on unpaid leave for 3 months and the cost will be borne by the government.

1



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- ✓ According to the statement of Family, Labour and Social Services Minister Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk, those who have been granted unpaid leave, who cannot benefit from a short-time work allowance and whose labour contracts are terminated starting from 15 March 2020 will be provided with 1177 TL monthly support until their unpaid leave or unemployment is over. There will be no tax deduction from the payments.
- ✓ Minister of Family, Social Services and Labor held evaluation meetings with worker, employer and civil servant confederations regarding the measures taken to protect employees and employment during the epidemic process.
- ✓ The Treasury and Finance Minister held an Extended Financial Stability and Development Committee meeting with non-governmental organizations to receive suggestions and requests for the return of working life and production.
- ✓ The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services will bear the costs for the elderly people who need care in the care centres.
- ✓ Within the scope of the Economic Stability Shield Package, the 1000 TL cash support consists of 3 phases. Totally 4.4 million paid. In the first phase, 1000 TL cash support payments was made between 1 and 5 April 2020 to 2 million 111 thousand households who are currently receiving regular social assistance. Payments for additional 2.3 million households started under phase 2. As in the first phase, the second phase households do not need to make any application as they are already registered in the Social Aid system. For the 3rd phase, payments will be based on the application, which can be made through e-Government.
- ✓ State-protected youth, the elderly, the disabled and women who are victims of violence support the fight against the new type of coronavirus with mask production. People all around the country that are under the protection, showed a remarkable example of solidarity with the mask they produce.
- ✓ Number of tests is dramatically increased. Regarding this, daily tests reached 40.000 and in total it has reached to 713.409 as of 21 April 2020.
- ✓ In order to minimize the risk of contamination; 64.000.000 TL allowance has been sent to nursing homes for cleaning, laboratories, medical supplies, medicines and other special supplies.





- ✓ The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services has published guidelines on measures to be taken at the construction sites as part of combating the new type of coronavirus (Covid-19). The 19-item guide published by the General Directorate of Occupational Health and Safety was brought to the attention of site workers and OSH professionals.
- ✓ The Turkish Health Ministry, in cooperation with local cell service providers, has launched an application to track the movement of patients diagnosed with the novel coronavirus through their smartphones to prevent further infections. Downloading the app is mandatory for all confirmed coronavirus patients, and those found to be leaving their homes by GPS tracking, will receive automated text messages and calls asking them to return to certain quarantine areas. If the citizens continue to disobey the rules, their violations will be shared with the security units and necessary administrative measures and enforcements will be implemented, such as a fine and if necessary incarceration. This app now can be downloaded by everyone and they will receive the alerts regarding risky locations and whether they contact with a COVID-19 positive person.
- ✓ New measures have been taken regarding homeless people, who are among the groups that COVID-19 disease can affect most. "Accommodation for the Homeless" project was launched by the Provincial Directorates of the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services. In this context,
 - Homeless people will be identified in the provinces and will be placed primarily in the guesthouses of public institutions located within the provincial borders. In case the concerned persons cannot be placed in public institution guesthouses, they may be provided with pensions, hotels or a place/house will be allocated to these people until the threat of epidemic disappears.
 - Before and during accommodation, with the help of health institutions, these people will be provided with periodic health check-ups and will be informed on the disease, transmission routes and personal precautions that can be taken.
 - The need of hygiene, health, basic food, clothing and other needs will be provided for the people given the accommodation. The expenses incurred in this context will be covered within the framework of the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation.
- ✓ 2 pandemic hospitals are in a process of construction and planned to be finished in 45 days in Istanbul. These hospitals will be used not only during the



outbreak but it will be designed and equipped to be used after the outbreak as well.

- ✓ The President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan launched “Basaksehir City Hospital” on 20 April 2020. There are a total of 725 examination rooms and 2,682 patient beds. The total closed area is 1 million 21 thousand square meters.
- ✓ The Presidential Cabinet schedules 4-stage normalization plan to return to normal life after a coronavirus pandemic. This “new normal” has been also led by the guidance and suggestions of the Science Committee. According to plan, the first stage will start on 11 May as market places, shopping malls, hairdressers and beauty salons will be opened. The second stage of normalization will take place between 27 May and 31 August.

Evaluations from HAK-IS Confederation

As HAK-İŞ, we have expressed our demands and solution suggestions in all meetings with the relevant Ministries in order to protect employment and employees.

4

We also presented our evaluations regarding the regulations in the work life and the following suggestions for better implementation of the existing regulations;

1. We consider the prohibition of layoffs as a very important step under the omnibus bill. In addition to this important regulation for employees, we find it worrying for our employees that the unpaid leave application is open to abuse due to prohibition of termination. We think that the application of unpaid leave can be abused, especially for economic reasons.

2. In order to prevent abuse of the unpaid leave application; we find it as an important step for the Ministry to monitor the practices of employers, and to publish a practice rescript on this issue to establish a method and to provide unity of implementation if necessary.

3. As HAK-İŞ; we demand that the conditions for benefiting from the Short Term Work Allowance to be improved in favour of the employees and making it based on actual working action. We believe that the Short Term Work Allowance should be improved in terms of the prohibition of termination, and all the applicants should



HAK-İŞ

HAK İŞÇİ SENDİKALARI KONFEDERASYONU
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benefit from this directly, while the conditions regarding the minimum insurances and premium payment days for workers are removed.

4. In this process, we published three joint declarations about Short Term Work Allowance and unpaid leave applications, as HAK-İŞ, TÜRK-İŞ and TİSK. We believe that operating the social dialogue mechanism effectively will contribute to this process.

5. We deem it necessary to provide cash support for 4 million refugee citizens living in our country who are affected by the epidemic.

6. As HAK-İŞ, within the scope of May 1 events, the theme of fighting epidemic and its effects on working life was used in the statements and posters we published this year.

