

Mr Faruk Çelik
Minister of Labour and Social
Security

Inonu Bulvari N 42, Emek 06520 Ankara - Turkey
[Letter sent by e-mail: okm@cgsb.gov.tr]

Dear Minister,

I thank you for your letter dated 28/06/2013, relating to the events in Istanbul and some other cities which took place in early June.

Turkey is, quite clearly, at the crossroads of continents and cultures. This cannot, however be used as an excuse. We do recognize that some progress has been made, be it in the economic area or in the social field, including the recent laws on health and safety and the reform of the labour law. However, as we have previously pointed out, this new labour law is still in breach of several ILO Core Labour Conventions as well as the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and must, therefore, be improved.

Regarding the events linked to the Taksim and other demonstrations, we once again want to highlight the police's totally disproportionate and excessive use of force— which Turkey has itself since acknowledged. Tragically, a sixth person died a few days ago. Additionally, twelve people have lost their eyesight following the use of teargas by the Turkish police and many others are still severely injured, not to speak about the thousands of detentions.

We also strongly protest against the recent repression of members of the Taksim Solidarity Platform, several of whom have been detained and some in unacceptable conditions. Using a special Parliamentary plenary session held at midnight on 9th July to adopt, in just a couple of hours, a new legislative clause with the aim of cutting the incomes of professional associations so as to better control them and thus prevent them from further actions, is anti-democratic. This is a retaliation by your AK Party against TMMOB. The Turkish police also searched the house of Arzu Atabek Cerkezoglu, the General Secretary of DISK, one of our member organizations.

While you claim that the present Government has adopted a “democratic approach, with a specific emphasis on social dialogue”, the ETUC is, on the contrary, extremely concerned about the increasing intimidation and repression of the opposition and of some trade unions.

The ETUC supported the accession of Turkey to the EU, but we underline our grave concerns regarding ongoing violations of certain fundamental human rights. We condemn the use of violence in demonstrations. We also urgently call on the Turkish Government to respect the ILO Core Labour Standards and, in particular, Convention 87 on the freedom of association, as well as the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes. The signature is slanted upwards from left to right.

Bernadette Ségol
General Secretary