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| Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS  telephone: 020 7636 4030 fax: 020 7636 0632 [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk/)  General Secretary: *Frances O’Grady* Deputy General Secretary: *Paul Nowak* |  |
| H.E. Mr Abdurrahman Bilgiç  Embassy of the Republic of Turkey  43 Belgrave Square  London SW1X 8PA | our ref FOG/SB/EUIRD  date: 20 April 2016  contact: Sean Bamford  direct line: 020 7467 1322  email: sbamford@tuc.org.uk |

Dear Mr Ambassador

Re. Draft bill on Agency Work

I am writing on behalf of the TUC to express our serious concern over a draft bill stipulating extensive amendments to the Labour Law (No. 4857) and the Employment Agency Law (No. 4904).

The draft has been endorsed by the Parliamentary Commission and is now before the Grand Assembly for consideration. However, fully effective consultations have not been carried out with the trade unions. This is despite the fact that these amendments will lead to a significant deterioration of workers’ rights throughout the entire labour market.

It is our understanding that the draft amendments give companies the right to use agency work in case of “unforeseen increase in business volume of enterprise” or “periodical business increases”. This stipulation is extremely broad and prone to abuse by employers who choose to employ workers under insecure short-term contracts in order to circumvent their obligations under labour laws and to prevent the unionization of their employees. The amendments thus bear the risk of depriving millions of workers from employment protection and fundamental rights at work.

Turkey has ratified ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and is therefore obliged to carry out “full and detailed consultations with the appropriate organizations of workers and employers” when introducing legislation affecting collective bargaining or conditions of employment.

Shockingly, your government cracked down on workers expressing their views about the draft amendments instead of engaging in constructive dialogue. Police violently interfered in a protest carried out in front of your office in Izmir. Numerous workers, including workers’ representative Arif Yıldız, were arrested while reading out a statement. The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association has repeatedly made clear that workers have the right to peaceful demonstration to defend their occupational interests. The detention of trade unionists for reasons connected with their activities in defence of the interests of workers constitutes a serious interference with civil liberties in general and with trade union rights in particular.

The TUC strongly urges your government to release workers who have been targeted for arrests and to withdraw the draft amendments from the parliamentary debate in order to engage in a constructive and effective dialogue with trade unions and to prevent the victimisation of workers as a result of the reforms.

Yours sincerely

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**FRANCES O’GRADY**

**General Secretary**