



Viktor Mihály Orbán
Prime Minister of Hungary

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Ref.: JWG/cb

Brussels, 5 December 2014

Dear Prime-Minister,

We have been informed that your government is seeking to abolish not only the system of early retirement but also the possibilities for early retirement for those working in jobs in such conditions that damage workers' health (physically heavy jobs) and which are hard for elderly workers or workers who have done these jobs for many years to continue to do until retirement. I understand that your government discards the proposals of the trade unions and has not entered into negotiations and dialogue with the representatives of the workers. Many proposals are communicated via the media or only revealed when proposals for the public budget are made. This is not acceptable and we ask you to enter into dialogue and find negotiated solutions with the trade unions.

Early retirement, retirement and pensions are important parts of the bargaining agenda in all EU-countries and often hotly debated. Sustainable solutions are possible and the most durable and supported ones are those negotiated with the trade unions.

Hungarian unions have made suggestions as to how early retirement could be dealt with and how to ensure workers reach their legal retirement age. This is important especially for those workers that work in dangerous and difficult conditions and which are exposed to one of more factors of occupational risks.

The social dialogue (bi-partite, tri-partite) and the negotiations it entails are one of the principles of the EU that Hungary accepted when joining the European Union. The social dialogue needs to be lived and developed. Also from this background we ask you to enter into discussion with the unions to find negotiated solutions.

Hungarian workers have demonstrated to show support for these demands, 3 December, and will continue to do so if negotiations do not take place.

I also use this opportunity to express our solidarity with the Hungarian public service workers which are showing their support for decent pay and conditions 6 December. Wage freezes and cuts in salaries are not the way forward, especially now Europe is on the brink of deflation and still in recession. If the governments in the EU do not stimulate demand (by ensuring proper pay rises) and investment in public infrastructure and public services, growth will not be restored, more people will suffer from growing poverty and unemployment while inequalities rise which rock our societies and with it the dangers of racism and extreme-right politics that undermine the values of our democracies.

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Dear Prime-Minister,

The social dialogue with the unions allows for solutions that can be supported by all sides, or at least are the outcome of joint debates and compromise.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Goudriaan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary

EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 265 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI). For more information on EPSU and our work please go to: <http://www.epsu.org>