



Geneva and Brussels, 15 September 2015

Mr Juha Sipilä
Prime Minister of Finland
By email: juha.sipila@vnk.fi; paula.lehtomaki@vnk.fi

IndustriALL Global Union and industriAll European Trade Union condemn Finnish government's attack on fundamental workers' rights

Dear Prime Minister,

IndustriALL Global Union and industriAll European Trade Union condemn the intention of the Finnish government to implement compulsory legislation that aims to restrict the right of the social partners to bargain and agree on the terms and conditions of work. IndustriALL Global Union and industriAll European Trade Union together represent tens of millions of workers in the energy, mining and manufacturing sectors in Europe and around the world.

Our Finnish affiliates have informed us that planned restrictions to collective bargaining rights would prevent the social partners from agreeing on terms of work which are more favourable than the ones stipulated by legislation. Changes announced by your government include forced restrictions with regard to annual holiday entitlements, the introduction of a first day of unpaid sick leave, reductions in compensation for overtime and work on Sundays as well as converting paid holidays into unpaid holidays.

A basic principle of the collective bargaining system is that it offers social partners the option to agree on more favourable terms for the worker than is set out in the legislation. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has stated that interference with this principle violates both ILO Convention 98 on the right to organise and conduct collective bargaining and the European Union's legislative framework. The internationally acknowledged principle is that labour legislation has to protect the weaker of the two social partners, i.e. the worker.

IndustriALL Global Union and industriAll European Trade Union fully support the demands of their Finnish affiliates for the government to withdraw these legislative proposals. We urge your government to sit down with the unions that represent a big majority of the Finnish workforce and hold discussions with them in good faith to find solutions that the Finnish people can accept whilst respecting the social partners in your country and their right to conduct collective bargaining freely.

Yours sincerely,

Jyrki Raina
General Secretary
IndustriALL Global Union

Ulrich Eckelmann
General Secretary
IndustriAll European Trade Union