



Geneva and Brussels, 26 February 2016

Ms. Marie-Françoise Damesin
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Via e-mail: mf.damesin@renault-nissan.com

IndustriALL Global and European Trade Unions Call On Renault Group to Uphold its Commitments at Oyak Plant in Turkey

Dear Ms. Damesin,

We are writing you this letter on behalf of IndustriALL Global and European Trade Unions representing millions of workers in mining, energy and manufacturing industries in Europe and more than 140 countries worldwide, to express our concerns and dissatisfaction about the current situation at Oyak plant in Turkey, and to call on Renault to uphold its commitments.

We are pleased to have a global framework agreement with Renault Group which consolidates the company's commitments to ILO's labor standards, including freedom of association and neutrality, and contains a number of major improvements in particular concerning skills, training, health and safety, and diversity. We remember your statement at the last renewal ceremony when you welcomed the agreement as it reflects Renault's commitment to corporate, social and environmental responsibility as a result of responsible social dialogue built over 20 years internationally.

Both our organizations believe that this is an important commitment for Renault for its labor relations worldwide.

We want to make a particular reference to fundamental rights as the agreement stipulates: "Every employee is free to join a trade union or not. The Renault Group also undertakes to respect the terms of the ILO convention no. 98 on the right to organize and collective bargaining. As such, the Renault Group respects the right of its employees to organize themselves collectively, and remains strictly neutral. The signatories undertake to respect the choice of each employee on this matter."

As you will know very well, there were a series of workers' actions and mobilizations in Turkish automotive and supplier sectors starting in the spring of 2015, which has also affected Oyak plant in Bursa.

At that time, both our organizations openly declared our union solidarity with our sisters and brothers from Turkey as they were trying to enjoy their internationally recognized rights to choose their union freely and to elect their representatives and shop stewards. They also wanted to be paid a living wage that provides for a decent living standard. Then we

announced our strong opposition against any police intervention, violence or dismissals of the workers.

It was important that after a while there was an agreement in the industry, including at Oyak plant, and a written and signed management announcement was made on 26 May 2016 with a series of commitments, including employee representation. At that period, “spokespersons” were nominated to make sure that proper dialogue and communication get done at the workplace.

The management commitment also included elections with article 7 which reads: *“In case non-union workers who benefit from the collective bargaining agreement by paying solidarity fee freely elect spokespersons, spokespersons elected in the framework of legislation shall be accepted as counterpart to do communication between employer and workers, and current spokespersons shall be counterparts to do the communication between employer and workers until election.”*

We all now need to remember that at that time there was a collective bargaining agreement and trade union representation in accordance with the current Turkish trade union and collective bargaining legislation.

After some months, workers at Renault started to join our affiliate United Metalworkers’ Union (Birlesik Metal-Is) in the autumn months, and now Birlesik Metal-Is represents an overwhelming majority of workers through their free choice.

In this period, workers continued to raise their demand for free elections for their spokespersons, and a series of meetings with the participation of representatives from IndustriALL Global Union and Birlesik Metal-Is as well as Renault managers.

After long sessions, an agreement between Renault and IndustriALL Global Union was reached in Istanbul on 4 February 2016 about formation and election of a Social Dialogue Committee (SDC) at Oyak plant in Bursa. The said agreement sets out composition and duties of the SDC, terms and conditions for elections fixing 29 February 2016 as the date for elections. This was also announced to the workers, and they are looking forward to realizing it.

It is a big disappointment and dissatisfaction for both our organizations to hear that Renault would not respect the reached agreement and as a result elections would not take place. Even your local management notified Birlesik Metal-Is that in case elections take place, police forces will be invited to the plant for an eventual intervention.

We understand that Renault argues some pressure from the Turkish Government for not holding any election as it would breach the legislation in vigor. This argument is certainly not credible as far as we are concerned since it does not represent the reality.

Obviously, Turkey’s labor and trade union legislation is not in line with the norms and standards set out by International Labor Organization (ILO), and as a matter of fact, different ILO committees make regular criticism on this matter.

It is clear to us that as we have a global agreement, the core labor standards and relevant jurisprudence of the ILO will take precedence over national laws in case the latter are less favorable than the respective ILO Conventions.

However, there is not any provision in Turkish legislation that prevents such elections at the workplace. If a practice is not explicitly banned in national legislation, it can never be called “illegal”. This is why the arguments claiming that elections are illegal are unfounded. We are

of the opinion that this only aims at justifying not holding elections even though there was a consensus on this.

At this point one can easily ask why Renault made the May announcement in this direction if this was illegal. Let us repeat ourselves again that upcoming elections never breach national legislation, and more importantly are in line with the international standards to which the global framework agreement between Renault and IndustriALL Global Union makes strong reference.

Once again, Renault must uphold its previously made commitments to hold free elections at Oyak plant in Bursa.

We are certain that compliance with the said agreement for formation of a social dialogue is the surest way to be able to establish confidence and peace at the workplace and to address the current labor problems at the workplace.

If the agreed elections do not take place on 29 February, it would certainly be a serious violation of our general and specific agreements, and discouraging to keep the confidence and constructive relations which we have managed to establish worldwide. We believe and want that such situation would not create wider effects in our relations at the global level.

We clearly expect from you to make it clear to all relevant parties, including the Turkish government, that these elections are part of the commitments of Renault since it respects democratic and legitimate rights of its workers' and aims at addressing all labor-related issues through genuine social dialogue.

Therefore, we urge you urgently to fulfill requirements of our agreement and to wage all possible efforts to make sure that the agreed elections take place on 29 February 2016 at Oyak plant in a peaceful and democratic environment.

We look forward to hearing from you urgently.

Sincerely,



Jyrki Raina
General Secretary
IndustriALL Global Union



Ulrich Eckelmann
General Secretary
IndustriAll European Trade Union