



Geneva and Brussels, 26 February 2016

Mr. Süleyman Soylu  
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## **Pressure and intervention on Renault Group not to organize free elections at Oyak Plant in Bursa in line with their commitments**

Dear Mr. Minister,

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, including in Turkey, to call on your Ministry to halt pressure and intervention on Renault Group not to organize free elections at Oyak plant in Bursa in line with their commitments.

Our organizations 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. This global level agreement reflects Renault's commitment to corporate, social and environmental responsibility as result of a responsible social dialogue built over 20 years internationally.

As you will appreciate, this is an important commitment for Renault for its labor relations worldwide. The agreement makes 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 read: *“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 know 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 was reached between Renault and IndustriALL Global Union 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 and fixes 29 February 2016 as the date for elections. This was also announced to the workers, and they are looking forward to realizing it.

With a big disappointment and dissatisfaction, we have heard that your Ministry called Renault managers to your offices to advise them not to organize any elections at the workplace, as it is illegal. This argument is certainly not credible as far as we are concerned since it does not represent the reality.

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 to hold elections even though there was a consensus with Renault management on this.

We are certain that 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.

Therefore, we call on you to urgently halt your direct pressure and intervention on Renault Group to not organize free elections at Oyak plant in Bursa in line with their commitments. We do believe that your Ministry should play a role to solve the current problems at the workplace rather than complicating the matters that have been settled by the relevant parties in their full autonomy in labor relations.

We look forward to hearing from you urgently.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized letters 'JR'.

Jyrki Raina  
General Secretary  
IndustriALL Global Union

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ulrich Eckelmann'.

Ulrich Eckelmann  
General Secretary  
IndustriAll European Trade Union