

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

Hungary: Public Discontent Rising as Government Refuses Dialogue

Brussels, 24 March 2016 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has written to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, calling on him to open a dialogue with the country's trade unions as public outrage grows over changes to the education system. Tens of thousands of people have taken to the streets in two public rallies in recent weeks, and union leaders are warning of widespread disruption if the government continues to refuse talks. While teachers are effectively denied the right to take legal strike action, there is growing support for a one-hour strike expected to take place on March 30.

Hungarian affiliate MASZSZ has informed the ITUC that it and other trade union bodies in the country have announced their support for the demands that the education system needs to be properly funded, and that the government's centralising of the education system and other changes it has introduced caused overall dysfunction, with serious overload for teachers and pupils, and lack of basic materials in schools. MASZSZ also reports increasing intimidation of union representatives and increasing anti-union actions by employers across the country.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said: "The government's refusal to work with teachers, and rejection of social dialogue, is a recipe for failure. The huge problems in the education sector are symptoms of a deeper malaise, affecting workers across the country. Instead of restricting workers' rights and other civil liberties, the government should change course and engage in open and constructive discussions."

Link to the letter to Prime Minister Orbán: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-letter-to-president-orban-re>

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