Autonomous Trade Union of Education, Science and Culture of Republic of Macedonia, SONK

MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND CULTURE WORKERS OF FYR MACEDONIA

Dear Dojcin, Dear colleagues:

Education International, the voice of teachers worldwide, stands in solidarity with your struggle for quality public education and improvement of the status of teachers. Workers in the education, science and culture sectors deserve the implementation of the negotiated wage increase as soon as possible: meaning January 2009.

Social dialogue is a unique and indispensable component of the European social model. It is however important that the, in this case, bipartite dialogue between the trade union organisation and the public authorities is based on trust, good faith and accountability. Earlier this year, SONK was proud to report to Pan European colleagues that it had signed a Memorandum on collective agreement and later that SONK had negotiated new collective agreements for primary and secondary education workers. Now, unfortunately, we hear that the Government is not living up to its commitment and announces it will postpone the implementation of the wage increase to the 1st of January 2010! The Government also refuses now to increase the amounts of the food and transportation bonuses for employees in the public sector.

Governments have to acknowledge the economic and professional needs of teachers: teacher training, adequate remuneration in recognition of professional status and the job teachers do – there is no work that is more important than educating our young ones, the citizens of tomorrow.

The working conditions of education workers in FYR Macedonia are not easy. Student-teacher ratios at both the primary and secondary levels are higher than among other countries in the region.

The ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers states in paragraph 115 that "Teachers' salaries should: (a) reflect the importance to society of the teaching function and hence the importance of teachers as well as the responsibilities of all kinds which fall upon them from the time of their entry into the service; (b) compare favourably with salaries paid in other occupations requiring similar or equivalent qualifications."

Dear colleagues,

Education International and its 30 million members support your efforts to maintain the dialogue with the Government on behalf of teachers and public education in FYR Macedonia.

Best wishes in your endeavours.

Sincerely yours,

Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary