

Ms Jülide SARIEROĞLU
Minister Labor and Social Security
Republic of Turkey
Inonu Bulvari, No: 42
06520 Emek
Ankara, Turkey

Via email: diyih@csgb.gov.tr

HTUR/JB

6 February 2018

Demand for release of Elif Cuhadar, member of KESK Executive Committee.

Dear Minister,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) represents 202 million workers in 163 countries, including in your country, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) represents 45 million members from 89 trade union organisations in 39 European countries, with 10 European Trade Union Federations. We hereby express our firm objection to the arrest and detention of Elif Cuhadar.

On 6 February 2018 in Ankara, anti-terror police raided the house of Ms Elif Cuhadar, executive committee member of the trade union KESK, and arrested her. The charges relate to her participation in a public panel discussion in İzmir four years ago. She was taken into custody in Ankara and will be transferred to İzmir. Several other people who were present at the event in İzmir in 2014 were also arrested. Elif participated in the ITUC Human Rights Committee meeting in Brussels on 28 November 2017.

The arrest of trade union activist Elif Cuhadar constitutes a serious breach of the rights to freedom of opinion, expression and association, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In addition, Turkey ratified ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and the Protection of the Right to Organise in 1993. The ILO Committee of Freedom of Association has confirmed that “measures depriving trade unionists of their freedom on grounds related to their trade union activity, even where they are merely summoned or questioned for a short period, constitute an obstacle to the exercise of trade union rights.”

The ITUC and ETUC, firmly denounce this latest arrest and ongoing trade union repression and demand the immediate and unconditional release of Elif Cuhadar. We look forward to receiving information, without delay, about the measures taken in response to our concerns.

Yours sincerely,



Sharan Burrow
ITUC General Secretary



Luca Visentini
ETUC General Secretary