



To Romania's Justice Minister
Ms Raluca Alexandra Pruna
Sent via email raluca.pruna@just.ro;
cabinet.ministru@just.ro
cc NAP, General Directorate Prison Services
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ooffice@anp.gov.ro
Trade Union SNLP

Ref. : JWG/NS/sd
Contact person : Nadja Salson nsalson@epsu.org

Re: Prison union protest for more staff and compensated overtime

Brussels, 14 October 2016

Dear Madam Minister,

On behalf of EPSU, the European Federation of Public Service Union that represents 8 million public service workers including in prison services across Europe, I am writing regarding the ongoing trade union protest actions against understaffing and uncompensated overtime in Romania's prison services.

Further to our statement in solidarity with our member SNLP, issued on 30 September last, copy of which is available on our website¹, I urge you to restore the dialogue with the trade unions as they are now entering their fourth week of protest actions.

For EPSU, the trade unions demands, supported by a large majority of prison workers, are quite legitimate and require an urgent response from your services:

Increased staffing levels

As acknowledged by your own ministry in order to respect the country's own regulations and ensure the good functioning of prisons there is today a shortage of 8000 staff in correctional services.

This blatant case of massive understaffing has serious consequences for the health and safety of both staff and inmates and the latter's long-term rehabilitation in society. Whilst we are fully aware of the progress made with reducing prison overcrowding over the past years in Romania, the situation remains nevertheless extremely acute and is not in line with the Council of Europe's rules on prison services that provide, amongst others, for sufficient numbers of staff on permanent contracts.

Time off in lieu for overtime

According to the SNLP, prison staff accumulate yearly an enormous amount of more than 1 million extra hours, out of which half are never compensated. This means that prison staff are doing work for free, which is unacceptable.

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European 1 <http://www.epsu.org/article/romania%E2%80%99s-prison-union-protest-against-understaffing-and-uncompensated-overtime-epsu>

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Federation of Public Service Unions					EPSU is a member of the ETUC and represents PSI in Europe	

As we recently celebrated World Day for Decent Work on 7 October, it may be worth reminding that decent work include work that delivers an income. Whilst excessive working time is a serious health hazard, the least workers can expect is to be paid or compensated for it. I therefore urge you to at least compensate workers, including retroactively, their overtime as a matter of urgency.

Further, excessive overtime also raises strong doubts as to the good application of the EU working time directive that provides, amongst others, for a maximum weekly working time, including overtime, of 48 hours and for a minimum daily rest period of 11 consecutive hours per 24-hour period. I would therefore like to know the extent to which this EU health and safety directive is being complied with in prison services before alerting the European Commission on the situation.

Respect of the non-discrimination principle between employees

Last August, we understand that the governmental decision which among other aspects was issued in order to correct discrimination for defence, public order and national security was successfully applied across all services including the police and army except for the prison services.

Whilst some rules can vary in their application across the civil service in consultation with trade unions in light of the specific needs of both workers and services concerned, on this occasion it is unclear why the overarching principle of equal treatment between workers has been breached.

Respect of social dialogue

A well-functioning social dialogue is critical to well-being at work and finding long-lasting solutions, it is urgent it be reactivated as we are entering the fourth week of protest.

Two years ago, EPSU took part in a social dialogue project led by SNLP with the support of the Norwegian government with the participation of a number of our affiliates and of your administration, NAP.

The key objectives of the project were to exchange good practices and policies regarding social dialogue, management of prison services, training and health and safety requirements. The outcomes were extremely encouraging thanks to the strong commitment from the trade unions and NAP to achieving long standing improvements to prison services and social dialogue.

As EPSU was particularly committed to this project, I am all the more saddened today that the shared lessons we drew together with NAP do not seem to stand the test of time. I also seem to remember that it was fully agreed that the policy and practice of social dialogue is a core value of the EU social model we adhere to and that there is no reason why it would stop at the prison doorstep.

I remain at your disposal for any further information you may require, meanwhile our colleagues from SNLP will keep us posted on further developments.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely



Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary

EPSU is the European Federation of Public Service Unions. It is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 265 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the energy, water and waste sectors, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI). For more information on EPSU and our work please go to: www.epsu.org

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