



Stockholm, 18 October 2021

Dear Ambassador Mironchik,

On behalf of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), the Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees (TCO), and the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations (Saco) which together represent more than 4 million workers in Sweden, we urge you to inform your government of our grave concerns, shared with our Belarusian trade union colleagues, over the continuing growing pressure against independent unions in Belarus. We call on your government to stop intimidation and harassment, including judicial harassment, of trade union leaders and member. We also call on your government to secure communications, internet connections and freedom of the press.

It is only a year since LO, TCO and Saco met with you, Mr Ambassador, to express our deepest concerns regarding the election procedures in Belarus. It is regrettable that once again, there is reason to express our concern about the democracy in Belarus. Please be reminded that this June, at the end of the 109th session of the International Labour Conference, where the case of Belarus was discussed and reviewed by the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards for the systematic violation of trade union rights and its failure to comply with ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association, the Committee issued a recommendation to Belarus to "refrain from the arrest, detention or engagement in violence, intimidation or harassment, including judicial harassment, of trade union leaders and members conducting lawful trade union activities."

However, we note with alarm that the suppression of democracy in Belarus has recently reached new heights, with unprecedented attacks launched on the ITUC-affiliated Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) and independent unionists. In September, members from the BKDP, senior activists from the Belarusian Independent Trade Union (BITU), and leaders of IndustriAll affiliate Belarusian Independent Trade Union (BNP) as well as dozens of activists were arrested, detained, prosecuted, and subjected to searches by the state security services. The Belarusian Association of Journalists was dissolved. We strongly condemn this suppression of the freedom of association in Belarus.

We stand in solidarity with the BKDP and independent unions and demand the Belarussian government:

- Stop any repressive campaigns and actions against trade unionists, and release all activists, sentenced or arrested for implementing their fundamental rights;
- Implement in full the recommendations of the ILO Commission of Inquiry and Committee on the Application of Standards and engage in dialog with BDKP and independent unions;



- Dismantle the obligatory registration of trade unions by local authorities that dissuades and eventually puts workers who want to create a union of their own choice at the will of management or governors, register new unions emerging without delay instead of penalizing founding members;
- Abolish the short-term contract system that promotes forced labour, builds a climate of fear and suppresses the dignity of workers and decency of work, denying freedom of association, expression and assembly;
- Respect the right of workers to withdraw their labour when their rights – including in relation to healthy and safe working conditions or their democratic freedoms – are violated.

We would be grateful if you could convey our concerns to your government and inform us of their response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Susanna Gideonsson'.

Susanna Gideonsson
Ordförande LO

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Therese Svanström'.

Therese Svanström
Ordförande TCO

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Göran Arrius'.

Göran Arrius
Ordförande Saco