

Brussels, 22 May 2026

## **Statement of solidarity with Slovenian trade unions and defence of social dialogue**

The Workers' Group at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC Workers' Group) expresses its grave concern regarding recent legislative developments in Slovenia, in particular the proposed intervention legislation and the announced changes to the system for the collection of trade union membership fees.

These measures cannot be viewed separately. Taken together, they indicate a broader pattern of weakening established mechanisms of social dialogue and restricting the effective functioning of representative trade unions.

We are particularly concerned that the proposed intervention legislation introduces extensive changes across key areas of labour law, pensions, social security and healthcare without meaningful consultation with representative social partners.

Such an approach raises serious concerns regarding democratic legitimacy, legal certainty and respect for tripartite governance. The use of omnibus "intervention legislation" to fundamentally alter social and labour legislation bypasses the ordinary processes through which social consensus is normally built in democratic societies.

At the same time, proposals targeting the established system for the collection of trade union membership fees through payroll deduction represent a direct interference with the practical exercise of trade union freedoms. The check-off system is not merely an administrative arrangement; it is an established mechanism enabling workers to organise effectively and independently. Attempts to dismantle such mechanisms, especially in a context where trade unions publicly oppose government reforms, inevitably raise concerns about politically motivated interference in trade union activity.

Viewed together, these measures risk undermining not only individual workers' rights but also the institutional role of trade unions as legitimate and independent social partners. Democracy at work depends not only on the formal existence of trade unions, but also on the existence of conditions that allow them to operate freely, independently and effectively.

The European Court of Human Rights has consistently recognised that Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects the effective exercise of freedom of association, including the ability of trade unions to organise and defend their members' interests without unjustified state interference. In *Demir and Baykara v. Turkey*, the Court stressed the essential role of collective bargaining and trade union autonomy in democratic societies. In *ASLEF v. the United Kingdom*, it reaffirmed that trade unions must be protected from undue interference affecting their autonomous functioning.

ILO standards are equally clear. The Committee on Freedom of Association has repeatedly emphasised that public authorities must refrain from any interference which restricts trade union rights or impedes their lawful exercise, including interference affecting the administration and functioning of trade unions.

These developments also run counter to the direction set at European Union level. The European Commission and the EESC have repeatedly underlined that strong, representative and independent social partners are indispensable for democratic resilience, social cohesion and fair economic governance. Genuine social dialogue cannot exist where governments unilaterally impose structural reforms while simultaneously interfering with the organisational functioning of trade unions.

The EESC Workers' therefore stands in firm solidarity with Slovenian trade unions in defending freedom of association, autonomous social dialogue and the right of workers to organise freely and effectively.

We call on the Slovenian authorities to refrain from political interference in trade union organisation, to withdraw measures undermining the practical exercise of trade union rights, and to return immediately to genuine, good-faith dialogue with representative social partners in accordance with European democratic and social standards.

In solidarity,



Lucie Studničná  
President of the EESC Workers' Group