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Dear Sirs, Dear Madam,

I write to you on behalf of the Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation (LPSK), the biggest trade union centre in Lithuania.

On 27 December, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine submitted to the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) a new draft law on labour, without any consultations with unions, which would strip workers of legal protections, and unions of their ability to protect them. Other draft laws have been recently introduced in the same manner, namely draft laws “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine (Concerning Some Issues of Trade Union Activity)” (Reg. No. 2681), “On Amendments to the Labour Code of Ukraine concerning Additional Grounds for Dismissal” (Reg. No. 2584) and some others. They will erode fundamental rights in breach of international standards. These legislative amendments were developed behind closed doors and without full and frank tripartite consultations with representative trade unions.

Amongst others, they provide for the following stipulations that are problematic:

(1) The unilateral termination of employment contracts by employers in breach of art. 4 of ILO Convention No. 158 on Termination of Employment (ratified in 1994), which stipulates that terminations must be based on valid reasons that are either connected with the capacity or conduct of the worker or based on operational requirements. The complete discretion afforded to the employer to dismiss employees without severance pay is likely to particularly impact trade unionists and whistle-blowers.

(2) Employers may make changes to the terms of the employment contract and dismiss employees who refuse to accept changes. In practice, this means that the provisions of the employment contract are effectively only binding on the worker given that the employer may unilaterally introduce changes.

(3) The expansion and encouragement of the use of short-term and zero-hours contracts creates job and income insecurity, unpredictability of working hours and stress. The draft law allows the use of short-term contracts for up to five years, not taking into account the fact that all too often these contracts are abused, and workers are hired on consecutive short, fixed-duration contracts for work that is of a permanent nature.