

## Ukraine: Anti-worker legislation delayed following protests

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In a series of warning protests on 30 June, trade unions from all sectors, including education, mobilised against proposed changes in labour law violating freedom of association, the right to organise, and the right to collective bargaining. Trade union activists demonstrated in major cities to demand that the government shelve its plans to adopt the anti-union draft law 2681 as well as other anti-social draft laws. In Kyiv, several thousand activists picketed the buildings of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine and the Office of the President of Ukraine.

"Our main demand is to withdraw the [anti-union draft law](#) and to prepare any change to the trade union legislation only through the dialogue with trade unions!" - stated Georgiy Trukhanov, TUESWU President.

Trade union positions were presented to the Parliament and the President's office. Following the trade union actions, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine deferred consideration of the legislation.

The demands of the trade unions were:

- To stop further promotion by the Government of the anti-social draft law on labour which violates workers' trade union rights.
- To withdraw from the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine the anti-trade union draft law No 2681.
- To only make reforms in legislation with the consultation and participation of trade unions.
- To delete from the draft law No 2275 the elimination of equal representation by trade unions and employer organisations on the boards of social insurance funds.
- To remove Halyna Tretyakova from the position of the Chairman of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Social Policy and Protection of Veterans' Rights for pursuing anti-social policies.



In addition, trade unions urged authorities:

- To resume activities in workplaces and provide financial support to workers affected by the pandemic economic crisis, and to pay wage arrears.
- To maintain the affordability of health care services for the population by giving up the policy of closing health care facilities and dismissing health workers and by ensuring decent wages and safe working conditions for them in times of COVID-19 crisis.

This behaviour repeats methods employed at the end of 2019. At that time, the Government introduced two major pieces of labour legislation, including one on trade union rights, also without any real discussions with either trade unions or employer organisations, and tried to rush it through without proper consideration. There were also massive demonstrations by trade unions and global solidarity actions.

At the beginning of March of this year, a mission of the International Trade Union Confederation, the European Trade Union Confederation, and the Pan-European Regional Council had extensive meetings in Ukraine and were promised that labour reform legislation would be in conformity with ILO and European standards.

This time around, the trade unions of Ukraine received the support of Global Unions that, once again, contacted the President and the Parliament urging them to reconsider the proposed legislation. Many asked their affiliates to intervene as well. Education International sent an urgent action appeal to member organisations to protest this action. The Trade Union of Education and Science Workers of Ukraine expressed appreciation to EI and to [the European Regional Organisation, ETUCE](#), for their interventions as well as the support of member organisations.

In response to the trade union actions in Ukraine, EI General Secretary David Edwards said, “Although we congratulate our member organisation in Ukraine and the other unions for the delay in the consideration of this dangerous legislation, this has become an unfortunate pattern of the President and Parliament; to submit unwise legislation that compromises the fundamental human rights of workers without tripartite consultations and without asking for advice from the ILO. Rather, six months apart, they tried to put radical and far-reaching changes on a fast track. This is not only irresponsible in terms of workers and their rights, social cohesion, and the future of the economy, but erodes governance and democracy.”

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