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ETUCE

European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

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ETUCE Statement on the situation in Belarus

In light of the latest developments in Belarus, ETUCE expresses its solidarity with the teachers and people of Belarus and its member organisation, the Belarus trade union of Education and Science Workers, ESTU.

It is with great concern that the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) is following the current developments in Belarus after the recent presidential elections.

While most governments and the EU Summit meeting on Wednesday, 19 August 2020 have not accepted the national elections in Belarus, contesting them as fraud and not fair, ETUCE strongly denounces the violence used by the Belorussian authorities towards the peaceful protesters across the country, including arrests and detention of citizens. We condemn the suppression of internet and media, detentions and intimidation of journalists in order to stop the flow of information about the situation in the country, and the prevention of public discussion and any collective response to the electoral fraud. We furthermore deplore the attacks on workers and their human right to suspend their work in protest.

ETUCE calls on the Belorussian authorities to immediately stop any violence, release all arrested and imprisoned protestors, and proceed against all the officials responsible for all forms of repression against peaceful demonstrators. Most important the Belorussian authorities should engage in meaningful dialogue with the opposition in order to launch a new electoral process, under the supervision of the Election Committee that can be trusted by all the parties, including international observers. Moreover, the authorities have to ensure that the internet connection is promptly restored, roads are deblocked, and journalists can freely do their work to inform the population about the situation in the country and outside.

ETUCE recalls the importance of the inclusion of the trade unions in the development of a truly democratic process building on tolerance, inclusion and the respect of the transversal fundamental values, freedoms and human and trade union rights in the country. ETUCE stands ready to support its member organisation ESTU in its endeavour for these goals and calls on international policy-makers and authorities, including the EU, the Council of Europe, the UN and the ILO to do their utmost and take serious steps to favour a democratic process and strong civil society movement involving the trade union movement.

In these turbulent times, ETUCE and its member organisations express their firm solidarity with the teachers, school leaders and other education personnel as well as the students and wish the workers and people of Belarus strength and courage in their demands for change and a democratic society.