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European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

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ETUCE Statement

On the arrest of female trade unionists in Turkey

Hereby the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) strongly condemn the police action against union members of Public Employees' Unions Confederation (KESK) in Ankara on 13 February 2012. While union offices were systematically searched fifteen female trade unionists at their homes were literally dragged out of their beds and taken into custody. Today, nine trade unionists and among them three women from ETUCE's member organisation Egitim Sen are still kept by the police waiting to be released.

Apparently, that police action was organised against the background of the KESK's work prior to the international women day. The trade union women had prepared a work program for their upcoming activities on the 8th March 2012. According to Egitim Sen the KESK women's assembly had adopted resolutions aiming to get acceptance for the 8th March to become an official holiday in Turkey. KESK assumes that these arrests are directly related to their women's activities. KESK hinted that the action is "a political operation which undermines our struggle for women's rights, labour rights, democracy, peace, and freedom."

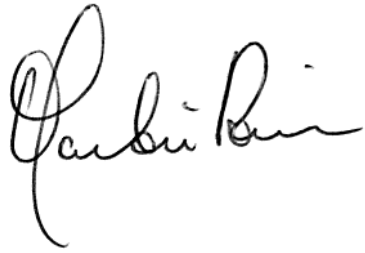
The ETUCE does not only want to protest against this action which obviously again has proven Turkey's disrespect against basic trade union and human rights. The ETUCE wants in particular to express its anger about the extent of contempt and the level of pitiless brutality against female trade unionists. These fifteen women have been treated worse than ordinary criminals while exercising their rights and activities in their peaceful attempt to build a democratic future which they believe in. Such an approach and degrading treatment of people on no legal grounds is morally offensive and cannot be tolerated.

The ETUCE declares solidarity with

- Canan alađan, KESK Women's Secretary
- Guldane Erdogan, Women's Secretary of Egitim Sen Ankara Branch 2
- Hatice Beydilli, member of Egitim Sen Ankara Branch 1
- Evrim 3zdemir Ođrař, member of Egitim Sen Ankara Branch 1
- G3ler Elveren, Women's Secretary of T3m Bel Sen
- Bedriye Yorgun, Women's Secretary of SES
- Belkis Yurtseven, member of the SES Ankara Branch
- H3lyya Mendilliođlu, member of the SES Ankara Branch
- Nurřat Yeřil, member of the SES Ankara Branch.

The ETUCE demands for the immediate release of these trade union leaders. The ETUCE also sincerely hopes that the continuous undermining of trade union activities in Turkey through intimidation and harassment will stop.

For the ETUCE,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Rømer', written in a cursive style.

Martin Rømer
European Director

Brussels, 17 February 2012

ETUCE, the European Trade Union Committee for Education represents 135 Teacher Unions in Europe and 12.8 million teachers from all levels of the education sector. ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at the EU level and an Industry Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is the European Region of Education International.