

REGIONALNI SAVET SINDIKATA **SOLIDARNOST**

Regionalna projekta kancelarija

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Podgorica, 8 July 2021

On the occasion of the 2nd Ministerial Conference on Employment and Social Affairs on July 8, 2021 in Ljubljana:

- *we, as trade union confederation members of the **Regional Trade Union Council Solidarnost**, namely: Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia, Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia, Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Croatia, Confederation of Trade Unions of the Republika Srpska, Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, TUC NEZAVISNOST, Confederation of Trade Unions of Montenegro, Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro, Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia and Macedonian Confederation of Free Trade Unions;*

Welcome the active approach of the EU at the beginning of Slovenia's presidency of the EU Council. Clearly defining goals for resolving the health crisis and economic recovery and priorities that include increasing investment, creating new and quality jobs while maintaining existing ones, achieving a climate-neutral Europe, strengthening the European social model, protecting democracy, human rights, freedoms and especially continuing the EU enlargement process, are extremely important for the Western Balkans. None of us can solve the big challenges of our time alone. We need European and international cooperation.

In this regard, we welcome the holding of the 2nd EU - Western Balkans Ministerial Conference on Employment and Social Affairs at the very beginning of the Slovenian Presidency. But it is incomprehensible that governments and line ministries did not involve trade unions in the preparations for the Ministerial Conference in a timely manner, or not at all. It is unacceptable to discuss world affairs issues without Trade Unions. Therefore, the Trade Unions, members of RSS Solidarity express disappointment and protest because of this omission.

The crisis caused by COVID-19 has, among other things, exposed all the shortcomings of previous policies for the inclusion of young people in the labor market. It is high time for the social partners to be fully involved in achieving decent work for young people, which means good conditions, decent wages, and permanent employment.

We believe that it is necessary to confirm the recognition of the Western Balkans region, as one of the main geostrategic priorities of the EU, which in practice means greater EU presence, increased enlargement activities and greater availability of funds for regional

development, as well as more specific trade union participation in socio-economic processes recovery, equitable energy transition and sustainable development.

The Regional Trade Union Council "Solidarity" was established in 2011 and consists of the above-mentioned representative trade union headquarters. The Council was established in Ljubljana, in coordination with the European Trade Union Confederation - ETUC and with the financial support of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and later the European Commission.