



**Faruk Çelik**  
**Minister of Work and Social Security of Turkey**  
Inonu Bulvari N 42, Emek 06520  
Ankara - Turkey  
Letter sent by e-mail: [okm@cgsb.gov.tr](mailto:okm@cgsb.gov.tr)  
Fax: +90 312 212 72 30

File Reference: RP/SV/CHM  
Contact: [Sandra.Vermuyten@world-psi.org](mailto:Sandra.Vermuyten@world-psi.org)  
28 August 2013

Dear Minister Faruk Çelik,

On behalf of Public Services International (PSI), representing more than 20 million women and men in the public sector, I would like to express our support to our colleagues of Genel-Is. We have been informed of a dispute between Genel-Is and two of Izmir's Metropolitan Municipal companies, Izelman and Izenerji. After a deadlock in collective negotiations, and failure to reach an agreement during the subsequent mediation process, Genel-Is took the decision to call a strike for the 26 July, 2013.

Considering that the Law on Trade Unions and Collective Labour Agreements prohibits strikes by some workers, including urban public transportation and city water workers, Genel-Is limited the scope of its strike. Notwithstanding, the employers of Izelman and Izenerji proceeded to apply to the Higher Board of Arbitration on the grounds that it was illegal for their employees to strike. Despite the fact that the workers affected by the prohibition to strike were not called upon to do so by Genel-Is, the Higher Board of Arbitration processed the application by the two companies and settled the dispute on 24 July unilaterally concluding collective agreements two days before the planned strike took place.

This action deprived the workers of a key instrument in negotiating their working conditions, even though the right to strike is foreseen in ILO conventions and the European Social Charter that Turkey has signed. As a result, the companies and the Higher Board of Arbitration violate these international standards. We support our colleagues in denouncing the legitimacy of the application to the Higher Board of Arbitration.

Therefore, we recommend a review of the Board's decision to assure that the constitutional rights to freedom of association and the right to strike are fully respected. We further state our solidarity with Genel-Is and the Turkish workers' constitutional right to strike. Further, we trust that this right will not be infringed and that this dispute will not be foreclosed by arbitrary means.

We look forward to the measures you are taking so workers are not deprived of their rights. We will continue to monitor the situation and inform European and international authorities accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

Rosa Pavanelli  
General Secretary