



Mr. Aziz Kocaoğlu, Mayor of Izmir  
Metropolitan Municipality  
Cumhuriyet Bulvari No: 1 Konak  
Izmir - Turkiye  
Fax: +90 232 2933995

Higher Board of Arbitration  
Ministry of Labour and Social Security of  
Turkish Republic  
Inonu Bulvari No: 42  
06520 Emek  
Ankara - Turkiye  
Fax no: +90 312 2230321

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

Dear Mr Aziz Kocaoğlu, and the General Secretariat of Higher Board of Arbitration,

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rosa Pavanelli'.

Rosa Pavanelli  
General Secretary