

## **CETUN Letter on the Current Crisis in Social Dialogue in Montenegro**

We are writing to you on the behalf of the Central European Trade Union Network (CETUN) to express our deep concern regarding the current crisis in social dialogue at the national level in Montenegro. The marginalization of trade unions and the politicization of wage negotiations send a message that runs contrary to the path of EU accession. On this occasion, we emphasize that an effective social dialogue is one of the key criteria for closing Chapter 19. This criterion implies that the Government negotiates with representative trade unions; that these negotiations are conducted in "good faith"; that social partners are included in decision-making processes that affect labour and social rights; and that a stable system of collective bargaining is in place.

According to our latest information, and in line with the conclusion of the Social Council, an extraordinary session of the Social Council was supposed to be held no later than June 22, 2026, where the Government was expected to present its stance. However, this did not happen; instead, a new postponement was requested. As a result, since April 30, 2026, more than 100,000 employees, who are not protected by branch collective agreements, have been left without the minimum labor rights guaranteed by the General Collective Agreement.

Last December, representative organizations of trade unions and employers of Montenegro (the Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro, the Confederation of Trade Unions of Montenegro, and the Montenegrin Employers Federation) submitted proposals to the Government for concluding the General Collective Agreement and increasing the calculation value of job complexity coefficients, to which they have not received a concrete response since.

We understand that the Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro (UFTUM), in response to this situation, has scheduled a third consecutive protest, to be held on June 25, 2026. We express even greater concern regarding the fact that the second peaceful protest, which UFTUM had scheduled for the day of the EU-Western Balkans Summit held on June 5 in Tivat, was banned. This violated the core principles of human rights guaranteed by Articles 10 and 11 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, namely, the right to freedom of expression and assembly. We believe that this does not reflect well on the policies of the Government of Montenegro, especially at a time when the closing of all negotiating chapters, including Chapter 19, and Montenegro's accession to the European Union are anticipated.

Given that, at the time of writing this letter, the representative trade unions in Montenegro are seeking our support in exercising their right to social dialogue and collective bargaining, we call upon the Government of Montenegro to make maximum efforts to restore social dialogue in the country to its core values. In the coming period, CETUN and

its members will closely monitor this process and, through their representatives in the European Parliament, exert influence to ensure that this crucial criterion for closing Chapter 19 is fully respected.

**Sincerely,**

**The Central European Trade Union Network (CETUN)**

### **About**

*The Central European Trade Union Network (CETUN) assembles trade unions from Czechia, Croatia, Liechtenstein, Hungary, Montenegro, Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Serbia, and Switzerland. As a regional grouping of ETUC members, the network's goal is to foster trade union structures and social dialogue in the region. Through greater cooperation and coordination, participants aspire to promote common themes at European level.*

### **Contact**



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