



# REGIONAL ENERGY TRADE UNIONS NETWORK of SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

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The Regional Energy Trade Unions Network of South Eastern Europe (RETUN-SEE) has set 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 as a Day of Action and Solidarity for the workers of Romania, under the slogan “The struggle of Romanian workers is our struggle too”.

The member organizations of the Regional Energy Trade Unions Network of South Eastern Europe (RETUN-SEE), in the framework of our solidarity towards the workers of Romania, have adopted the following resolution:

## RESOLUTION

### *Only united can we achieve collective rights!*

In Romania employees are faced with a drastic reduction of collective rights.

Thus, after starting from zero, in 1990 employees organized by trade unions were able to achieve more collective rights. We negotiated a collective labour agreement at national level that guaranteed for employees additional rights to those specified in the law regarding wages, working time and rest time, holidays, working conditions, and health and safety.

Through the national collective agreement the wages were guaranteed starting from the minimum wage (set by law) and increasing, as a percentage, depending on the qualifications required by the job.

In all sectors there were negotiated agreements for all employees in the sector (irrespective of affiliation or not to a trade union) which guaranteed greater rights than those stipulated in the national collective agreement.

2011 was a black year both for employees and the whole trade union movement in Romania. That year, both the Labour Code, which established workers' rights, and laws guaranteeing social dialogue were changed. So, starting in 2011 it was not possible to negotiate a national collective agreement and employees in companies where there were no unions were devoid of any collective right.

After 2011, over 80% of the new labour agreements were signed at the level of minimum wage, regardless of the qualifications required by the job.

Also, over 90% of employees hired after 2011 had an annual leave of only the number of days established by law. And these were just two examples of what the extinction of the single collective agreement at national level meant.

Regarding the agreements at sectoral level, they couldn't be concluded in private sectors because of changes in legislation, so employees there remained without collective rights.

Trade unions received one more blow when it was established that the degree of representativeness for negotiation of collective agreements had to be 50% plus one of the total number of employees, so overwhelmingly the agreement at plant level was not negotiated by unions, but by representatives of the employees, most often chosen by the employer or the owner.

In these conditions, even if the employees have a collective agreement, their rights are only the minimum set by law. The only employees of Romania who have collective rights are those who have strong unions that negotiated a collective agreement at plant level, but the possibilities are much lower in this case, as they do not have any higher level agreements at sectoral or national level.

The National Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Romania FRATIA and "LAZAR EDELEANU" Federation, even before the amendment of the law, had called for amending the legislation so that negotiations could be possible at all levels.

Unfortunately, successive governments that ruled the country, whether they were left or right, promised the change of the legislation, but ultimately did nothing. We are convinced that this has been imposed also by the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the World Bank.

Lack of specialized labour courts at all levels leads to the rejection of appeals filed by employees whose collective or individual rights have been violated, and unions losing ground in this regard.

We are convinced that only united, all employees will be able to regain collective rights.

## RETUNSEE PRESIDIU

