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From **industriAll European Trade Union**

Workers throughout Europe are worried about their health and their life! No worker should be forced to work unless their activities are required to meet essential needs. Social partners must strive for agreements offering a maximum of protection for workers.

The unprecedented health crisis due to the COVID-19 outbreak calls on every one of us to take all possible preventive measures to ensure the safety and health of the entire population. Many countries are applying lockdowns to delay the coronavirus pandemic and there is widespread agreement about the inevitability of these measures. However, there is growing anxiety and anger among employees that are forced to continue going to work. This has given rise to several "COVID-19 strikes".

Faced with this emergency, we call on employers to ensure that workers are not forced to go to their workplaces if their activities are not vital to the management of the current situation and do not meet essential needs. Currently, this must be the priority as social distancing is essential to slow down the impact of the pandemic.

We note different situations for companies. Some have introduced complete temporary shutdowns, others have put in place arrangements for short-time work while in some cases, workers and their representatives struggle to enforce basic protective measures. We are also aware that some employers are using government decisions to declare some sectors "crucial and essential sectors" as excuse to force workers to continue working even if they are not directly involved in vital activities. It cannot be the sole responsibility of employers to define what is 'vital' or not. Trade unions need to be involved in listing these activities. In the so-called "crucial and essential sectors", social partners at company level must make specific arrangements to ensure that only workers involved in essential production and services continue their activities with the best possible protection in place. Keeping our people safe and helping to limit the spread of the virus requires the commitment of all of us! In this crisis, taking care of each other is the priority! While it is necessary to continue activities that are essential for the population in this period of crisis, social dialogue must enable us to find the right and balanced solutions.

For those who must continue working, we urge employers to take adequate protective measures and to involve the trade unions in adapting work organisation and ensuring the safety of employees. Those employees must also receive exceptional compensation in recognition of their special commitment in a high-risk situation.

In Europe, many workers no longer work or have seen their hours reduced. Some are in quarantine or must stay home to look after their children. Others have seen their plants shut down for sanitary reasons or due to shortages of components or products. All these workers must

be relieved of the fear of a massive loss of income through short-time work arrangements, the payment of high-level sick pay or wage compensation by public authorities.

At all levels, social partners must work together to reach agreements on short-time work arrangements that provide a high level of wage compensation for workers. Temporary workers and any forms of atypical contracts must be included in these arrangements. By doing so, social partners will contribute to mitigating the consequences of the pandemic on workers, companies and on the whole economy. In these times of crisis, strengthening solidarity is a collective responsibility.