

Petrol-İş Statement on Covid-19

23 March 2020/İstanbul/Turkey

Millions of manufacturing workers need protection and the necessary measures should be taken at the workplaces.

Covid-19 threatening our country and our world has been turning into a great problem in terms of its social and economic consequences. All of the institutions are mobilised against such a disastrous pandemic and should be in solidarity.

As of the first Covid 19 case in Turkey in 10 March, all doctors and workers in the health sector have been making great effort, trying to take necessary measures and bailout packages have been declared by the government.

But, at this point, it is obvious that the declared bailout packages are insufficient. It seems that the new comprehensive packages have to be prepared considering the Covid 19 cases speed increase in the recent days.

First, all the schools are closed until end of the April and the universities are also ended the term. Restaurants, cafes, concerts, theatre and sport centres closed. Government declared that there will be flexible work and administrative leave for those who is 65 and over in the public sector. Government also banned people over 65 going out. They have to stay home.

But, on the other hand, in order to meet the needs of the society, millions of workers has been working under this extraordinary conditions. Workers who has not got any other income except for their wages do not want to lose their work are working under great risk of pandemic.

We, as Petrol-İş, once again, calls on the government to take the necessary public measures as soon as possible and all the workers' lives shall be under the protection. Within this context, we ask for government to take the following measures:

-In the factories in private sector, continuity of the employment of millions of workers at the workplaces, facilities, mines and in the service sector offices should be under the guarantee of the public/state. Dismissals should be forbidden during the Covid-19 pandemic.

-All the factories under risk of pandemic except for those producing basic necessity goods should be stopped. Employees working in these companies should be on paid leave. The government should take necessary measures due to halt of production in these workplaces.

-The articles in the “Labour Code of Turkey” related to the “halt of production due to force majeure should be implemented in the advantage of workers and the rights of workers those who can not participate in the production process during this pandemic should be protected in this context.

-It seems that it is impossible to have meetings for collective bargaining negotiations. So, Petrol-İş requests from government to make a change in the labour legislation to ease the CBAs process in order to protect the workers rights in the ongoing and coming collective bargaining negotiations.

-All the necessary measures to keep the workers safe in the production during this pandemic should be taken and the working conditions at the workplaces should be arranged considering the pandemic. Rapid and spread tests to detect the cases should be implemented in the entrance of the factories to keep the workforce healthy and safe.

-All the workers at the age of 65 and over should be on paid leave in the private sector.

-It is also important to ease the conditions for the workers to get benefit from the “unemployment insurance fund”. So, in this context, the amount of the payment should be increased, the period should be extended and the conditions to benefit from the fund should be eased.

-The use of “short time working payment” is a positive step to secure the employment. The employers will benefit from this payment. But, according to the current legislations, unemployment payment of the workers at the workplaces benefiting from the “short time working payment” is deducted from the amount of payment that will be paid to them when they are unemployed in the future. Such a practice is fully in disadvantage of the workers and should be ended. A new legislation in the advantage of workers is needed in this area.

We believe that after taking the necessary measures and in solidarity we will be in safe.

On Behalf of Petrol-İş Executive Committee

Süleyman Akyüz

President