

**"The labour recovery from the pandemic and developments in European capitals"**

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Introductory remarks

*Good morning everyone,*

The 20th Conference of the Network of Trade Unions of European Capitals is taking place at a particularly critical moment for Europe and the world, as we experience an unprecedented health crisis that is causing a catastrophic economic crisis.

During the pandemic, workers are at the forefront of the battle in hospitals, public transport, nursing homes, and various services, helping to keep society and the economy alive.

At the same time, millions of workers face many difficulties in their lives and earn a living, caused by measures to combat the corona virus.

As far as we are concerned, the pandemic has drastically changed the working landscape in our country as well.

A recent large-scale research (20/02/2021) on the private sector during the period of the pandemic carried out by the Labour Unions clearly reflects the intensity of financial and job insecurity and the growing concern of private sector workers for the changes brought about by the pandemic to their wages and labour rights.

Specifically: 56% of workers report that their incomes fell during the pandemic. Reductions that for 22% of employees mean losses of more than 31%, while for 14% mean losses of 21-31%.

Besides, the 40% of those working from home, evaluates negatively the rapid development of teleworking in relation to their professional development, the development of their pay, their working hours, their employment and labour rights, their personal life and their mental balance.

At EKA, from the first moment, we faced the pandemic with a sense of responsibility in the difficult times that our country is going through and in this situation, Public Health and the social interest are paramount.

Through proposals and various initiatives and actions, we declared from the very beginning that health crisis could not be a pretext for introducing regulations that invalidate labour law and condemn to unemployment a large part of the country's workforce.

That is why we are constantly emphasizing the need to combat infringements in the labour market related to undeclared work, uninsured work, pseudo-telework, various abuses and violations of labour law, and we are seeking, among other things, the strengthening of independent collective bargaining and their enrichment with the new issues arose due to intensification of digitalization.

From the Conference we expect to learn how things are developing in the other Capitals and to consider our joint actions for the next period.

Wishing success to the works of our Conference,

I thank you!