

MASZSZ: Government is driving workers into a state of slavery

Workers achievements of the past 200 years are being reset to point zero

The government is resetting to zero workers achievements of the past 200 years, depriving them of all their rights – states the Hungarian Trade Union Confederation / MASZSZ and its affiliates indignantly over the government's decree introducing 24-month working time frame. This totally unexpected move came in a particularly cynical way, on the evening of Good Friday. It is the unadulterated slave law.

The 104/2020 (10. 04) Government Decree give all power to the employer to unilaterally order a 24 month long working time frame, while prohibiting any derogations by collective agreements.

This measure complements the previous Government Decree on the measures “to mitigate the Covid-19 impacts on national economy” (18. 03), which suspended the provisions of the Labour Code „for the period of state of emergency” – making employees vulnerable and repealing collective agreements. The change of the Labour Code was made with the argument “to make employment regulations more flexible, in order to facilitate future agreements between employers and employees.”

None of these measures were consulted with trade unions!

MASZSZ president László Kordás stated that the Government is playing masses of workers into the hands employers by this decision. The legalisation of the free imposition of the 24-month working time frame means the arming of the slave law, for which decision-makers, use the pretext of this emergency situation, and the present vulnerability of the people. This move timed for Easter, especially for cynical reasons, give employers the freedom to unilaterally oblige anyone, at any time, for any length to work long overtime, even at home office mode, or in telework, for 24 months, with the payment for overtime to be settled at the end of the 24 month cycle. All this with the cynical reasoning: “to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the national economy”. For the same “reason” collective agreements are repealed, thus workers are left without protection from being overwhelmed by word of power.

While trade unions agree that it is a common interest to do everything to reduce the economic impact of the epidemic, but they strongly oppose the unilateral method. Although the tripartite consultation forum for the private sector (VKF) met twice that week, this significant move was made without any consultation with trade unions. All this in a situation, when there are spectacular means of protest, no way to organise mass demonstrations. This is not the first time that the Hungarian government has timed a drastic change for a holiday. The slave law has arrived for Christmas 2018 and its total arming has now “arrived” for Easter. Unions fear, that the changes to the Labour Code would not be revoked even after the emergency

situation is over. Kordás reminded that with the slave law, the government originally wanted to favour employers.

MASZSZ recalls that this latest decision soon will also apply to cultural workers still in public servant status. They received the notification also for Easter: by a legislative amendment app. 20.000 employees would be deprived of their public servant status. This is a weird mode to increase the mass of workers forced to be vulnerable to slavery.

MASZSZ and its member unions demand the withdrawal of the Government Decree and encourage workers not to sign an unfavourable overtime agreement for them on their own - always ask for the assistance of the local representative of the trade union.

Budapest, 14. 04. 2020