



28 April 2017
Ankara

Joint Statement of BWI Affiliates in Turkey On World Day for Safety and Health at Work

“One Death Is Too Many”

Dear Colleagues,

Occupational health and safety is one of the most fundamental aspects of work life and is accepted as a scientific discipline. The area of OHS displays a constant progress depending on changes in the production processes and in the community life. Nowadays, OHS issues that closely concern production processes, production methods, productivity, ergonomics and employees' health are considered together with the environmental matters. The main purpose of OHS practices is to ensure that employees work in safe environments without getting workplace accidents, occupational diseases and to protect their mental and physical health. According to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, health and safety in a working environment is a human right. The studies, conventions, recommendations and texts of international organizations such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Union (EU) are also in the same direction. One of the standards developed in the European Union at the community level and containing a high level of protection concerns occupational health and safety.

When there is no emphasis on occupational health and safety, the problems in this area show themselves as workplace accidents, occupational diseases, injuries and deaths. As a matter of fact, each year more than 2 million women and men lose their lives at work according to the ILO. Employees are exposed to 337 million accidents and 160 million work-related occupational diseases per year. All over the world, 1 worker every 15 seconds, about 6 thousand workers every day lose their lives due to accidents or occupational diseases. In our country, on average 4 to 6 workers lose their lives in workplace accidents every day. This number is even higher with those who lose their lives because of accidents or occupational diseases that do not enter the statistics. In terms of fatal accidents at work, Turkey ranks first in Europe and third in the world.

According to the "Report on Safety Culture at Work" prepared by the ILO, it is possible to prevent all occupational diseases and 98% of work accidents are preventable accidents. The study of ILO executes that if adequate measures can be taken, it would be possible to prevent many fatal accidents in our country, notably the tragedy happened in Soma. If it is predicted or preventable, but not prevented, the name or description of the workplace accident is "occupational murder". As the

affiliates of Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) from Turkey that organized in the sectors of construction, wood and forestry, we find it unacceptable that the deaths of workers who went to work to earn their bread and who did not return to their homes again, while it is possible to prevent the accidents. We believe passionately that One Death is Too Many!

For this reason, today on April 28 which is observed as "the day to remember those who have been killed and injured at work" since 1984 and which is declared by ILO as the "World Day for Safety and Health at Work" in 2001, we commemorate workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness due to workplace related hazards and incidents, we call public attention at national and international level to the death of workers and we advocate healthy, safe and decent jobs for the remaining who work for their bread.

Making studies to solve OHS relating problems, to develop health and safety measures in order to prevent worker deaths, criticizing the policies and practices, demanding the right to health and safety are among the main tasks of our unions. While we as the unions contribute effectively to the field of OHS, we strongly remind the social partners about their duties and responsibilities, we demand what needs to be done in this area and we inform the public:

- As is also understood from ILO Safety Report, accidents at work and occupational diseases are not a "fate". In order not to lead to new deaths, the mentality on occupational health and safety should be changed and the principle of "human first, workers' safety first" should be adopted.
- In order to ensure that the legislation of occupational health and safety is fully respected and the legal basis is fully achieved, national legislation should be introduced in accordance with the spirit of the ILO Conventions relating to this field.
- All barriers to unionization and right to organize should be removed.
- The subcontracting should be terminated.
- The OHS Committees established in the workplaces should be organized as democratic structures and should be equipped with sanction power.
- The number of labor inspectors should be increased and workplace inspections should be effective.
- The OHS officials and occupational physicians should perform their duties in an ethical frame and with professional independence.
- Efforts should be made to establish safety awareness and security culture in every part of the society.
- The number of hospitals or clinics on occupational diseases should be increased; studies for the detection of occupational diseases should be made.
- The objectives in the Policy Paper 2014 - 2018, adopted at the National Occupational Health and Safety Council, should be reached.
- Given the fact that job security and occupational health and safety are complement to each other, all employees should be covered by the social security umbrella. Uninsured and nonunion employment should be prevented; informal economy should be taken under record.
- Measures to be taken with regard to the OHS are not an additional cost but should be considered as applications that reduce accidents, prevent deaths, raise productivity and increase the competitiveness of products.
- Today, in more than 30 countries, "April 28" was adopted as an official day of remembrance and mourning. Also in many countries, campaigns are being held to that end. We, as the affiliates of BWI from Turkey, demand April 28 to be officially recognized and announced as the day of mourning and remembrance of workers who lost their lives due to accidents or occupational diseases.

As YOL-İŞⁱ, AĞAÇ-İŞⁱⁱ, ORMAN-İŞⁱⁱⁱ and TARIM ORMAN-İŞ^{iv}, the affiliates of Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI) from Turkey, we publicly announce with the responsibility and consciousness of representing tens of thousands of workers that we are ready to contribute to the healing work in the field of occupational health and safety which is a problematic area in our country and we will continue our struggle against workers' deaths.

In solidarity,

Ramazan Ađar
President, YOL-İŞ

Mürsel Taşçı
President, AĞAÇ-İŞ

Baki Yüksel
President, ORMAN-İŞ

Şükrü Durmuş
President, TARIM ORMAN-İŞ

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