



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

EL/LR/eb

Brussels, 02 April 2026

To:
Darije Hanzalek, President of NHS
Mladen Novosel, President of SSSH-UATUC
Sanja Šprem, President of MATICA
[Letter sent by e-mail]

Solidarity message for your mobilisation “Croatia Together for Higher Wages and Pensions”

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the European Trade Union Confederation, I send our full solidarity and support to the trade union movement of Croatia – SSSH, NHS and Matica – for your mobilisation “Croatia Together for Higher Wages and Pensions” together with SUH on 18 April in Zagreb. I am very pleased to be sending my colleague Tea Jarc, ETUC Confederal Secretary, who will be with you in person in the streets of Zagreb to carry the solidarity of the European trade union movement.

Your mobilisation shines a necessary light on the realities facing working people and pensioners in Croatia today. Despite years of economic growth, too many workers are still not receiving a fair share of the wealth they create, while the cost of living continues to rise sharply. Prices of food and basic goods are among the highest in the EU relative to purchasing power, housing costs are increasingly unaffordable, and many families are struggling to make ends meet. Pensioners are particularly exposed, with average pensions at around one third of average wages, leaving many at risk of poverty and unable to live with dignity.

This is not inevitable, and your action proves it. Trade unions across Europe are showing that when workers organise and mobilise, change is possible. In Spain, strengthened collective bargaining has delivered real wage increases. In Belgium, workers are mobilising through their unions to defend purchasing power and push back against attempts to make them pay for the crisis. And in Croatia itself, trade union mobilisation has already delivered victories, including securing a fairer pension age in the past.

Your action on 18 April builds on that proud tradition. It sends a clear message that workers and pensioners in Croatia will not accept falling living standards, rising inequality, or policies that leave them behind. Your demands for higher wages, adequate pensions, fairer distribution of profits, and affordable living costs are not only justified, they are essential.

The figures speak for themselves. While the minimum wage has risen to €970 per month, it still falls short of what is needed for a decent standard of living and remains below key adequacy benchmarks. At the same time, many workers face insecurity and too many older people are forced to live on incomes that do not keep pace with real costs. This is why your mobilisation matters.

Your action is of importance and inspiration to the European trade union movement as a whole. The attention of workers from across Europe will be on the streets of Zagreb on 18 April. You have shown before that collective action delivers results, and you will do so again. We are confident that this mobilisation will help win the higher wages and better pensions that working people and retirees in Croatia deserve.

Please be assured that the ETUC stands firmly with you, every step of the way. Your fight is our fight, and your success will strengthen workers’ rights across Europe.

I wish you every success for the demonstration on 18 April.

Esther Lynch
General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation