



American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

AFT Teachers
AFT PSRP
AFT Higher Education
AFT Public Employees
AFT Healthcare

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December 2, 2005

Mr. Serguei Stanishev
Prime Minister
Republic of Bulgaria
Sofia, Bulgaria

VIA e-mail: primeminister@government.bg

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I am writing on behalf of the 1.3 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, to express our concern regarding the working and living conditions of our colleagues in Bulgaria. It is our understanding that Bulgaria's 100,000 teachers make less than the equivalent of US\$200 a month and that they are asking for a 15 percent wage increase. On November 25th, two thousand teachers in your country began a hunger strike to protest their wages and working conditions. The children of Bulgaria deserve well-trained, well-compensated teachers. We strongly support their request for a wage increase.

Moreover, we are concerned to learn that the Bulgarian government has failed to engage in a productive dialogue with the Podkrepa Education Union and the Bulgarian Teachers' Trade Union on these issues. We urge you to begin negotiations with these unions on these legitimate requests of educators, to allow the hunger strikes to end, and to demonstrate a commitment to internationally recognized labor standards.

Sincerely,

Edward J. McElroy
President

EJM: dp opeiu#2 afl-cio

cc: Ambassador John R. Be Beyrle, U.S. Embassy, Sofia, Bulgaria