



American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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

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September 22, 2005

Prime Minister Vlado Buckovski
Government of the Republic of Macedonia
"Ilindenska" st, BB
1,000 Skopje
Republic of Macedonia

VIA FACSIMILE: 389-2 3 112 561
389 2 3 123 425

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 serious concern with your government's continued harassment and on-going refusal to bargain with the Trade Union of Education, Science and Culture (SONK). Your government's refusal to negotiate constitutes a continuing violation of the ILO Conventions on Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining, which the government of Macedonia has ratified.

We have been made aware of your government's illegal efforts to undermine the independence of SONK and to intimidate the union's leaders and members at both the local and national level. Moreover, we understand that you are negotiating with the leadership of the Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia, which has no legal right to negotiate for teachers and other workers in the education and culture sectors.

These actions on the part of your government are unacceptable. The AFT has worked closely with the leaders and members of SONK, and we know that they represent the best in democratic trade unionism. They are the legal and legitimate voice for education and cultural workers. They have demonstrated a deep commitment to democratic ideals, including the right to free association and the right to collective bargaining and the SONK leadership continues to have the strong support of the workers they represent.

Your government's repression of the legitimate, democratic union of education and cultural workers, including your refusal to negotiate with SONK, clearly detracts from the perception of Macedonia as a free and democratic country. These actions could well lead to the isolation of Macedonia among free and democratic states. I strongly urge you to take immediate action to uphold the

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rights of workers by reopening good faith negotiations with the elected national leaders of SONK.

Please let me know what steps you will be taking to end the repression of SONK so that I can relay your plans to our members throughout the United States. I am sending a copy of this letter to U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other officials in the U.S. government so that they will be aware of our serious objections to the actions of your government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward J. McElroy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Edward" being the most prominent.

Edward J. McElroy
President

EJM : dp opeiu#2 afl-cio

cc: Condoleezza Rice, United States Department of State