Oslo, 19 January 2023

Presidential Administration of the Republic of Belarus
Karl Marx str., 38 220016 Minsk, Belarus
Fax +375 (17) 222-35-56

Dear Madam or Sir,

Unio (The Confederation of Unions for Professionals) is outraged about criminal procedures used against leaders and activists of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions.

Leaders of BKDP, Aliaksandr Yarashuk and Siarhei Antusevich, staff member Iryna But-Husaim, the leaders of BKDP affiliated REP union Hennadiy Fiadynich, Vasili Berasneu, Vatslau Areshka, and several other activists, were recently sentenced to long terms in prison.

BKDP and its activists were acting based on fundamental rights enshrined in the ILO conventions 87 on Freedom of Association and Convention 98 on the Right to organize and Collective bargaining. The international community considers the decisions of the Belarusian judicial system as politically motivated.

Instead of resorting to punitive methods, such as disbanding BKDP and its affiliates, imprisonment for up to 9 years in prison for respectable, elderly, and medically fragile people; or leaving immature children of Iryna But-Husaim and activist Yanina Malash without mothers for years, Belarusian authorities could have afforded solving contradictions by dialog with BKDP as a national social partner.

We once again call on you to release political prisoners, leaders, and activists of democratic trade unions, reinstate the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade unions and all its affiliates, and to respect international obligations of the country.

Kind regards,
Unio

Ragnhild Lied
President