

## **ETUC statement on Russia**

adopted by the Executive Committee at the meeting of 22-23 March 2021

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The ETUC is seriously concerned about the Russian government's lack of respect of fundamental freedoms, following the harsh repression of public protests.

The Russian authorities used force to disperse protests detaining record numbers of people, many of whom were sentenced to administrative fines and some to administrative arrest. Incidents of violence were recorded. Several investigations were initiated in connection with the protests, including investigations against dozens of independent journalists who were simply doing their jobs, reporting events as they unfolded, while searches and intimidation of protesters continued.

Many of the protesters shared the same convictions, requesting the rule of law, democratic elections, freedom of media. They voiced also the same messages and calls for justice that the Russian trade unions have been reiterating for years, and repeated in the context of these events: extreme and growing inequalities, limitation of freedom of assembly, association and the right to strike, unfair wealth distribution, growing poverty and partiality of local authorities in favour of business elites.

The ETUC expresses its solidarity with the Russian population and working people and calls for the full respect of human rights and democratic freedoms. The ETUC also demands the Russian authorities to end the intimidation of protesters, who are peacefully expressing their opinions, and of journalists, who are just doing their jobs. We continue to support those who fight for democracy and fundamental rights wherever they are violated.

Finally, the ETUC expresses its deep concern that the shrinking democracy and lack of respect of fundamental freedoms, will further deteriorate relations between the European Union and Russia, thereby making the European geopolitical and economic context even more harmful to workers' interests.