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COVID-19, the coronavirus – Trade Union of Judiciary of Serbia



As all Serbian citizens, trade unions are in the state of emergency and a very uncertain situation. Almost all activities are frozen. When the emergency state was introduced, almost everybody was unprepared and at that time there were no recommendations about how to behave and protective means and equipment were lacking.

Having in mind that for the employees in judiciary bodies of Serbia (persecution offices and prisons) this is the third emergency state, we started behaving according to our experience, Primarily, responsibly to ourselves and others. We organised ourselves even before the recommendations of the Ministry of Justice came out.

The number of employees who come to work is reduced to a minimum and only urgent and pressing cases are being dealt with. Most often only custody cases. Apart from custody imposed on people who violate isolation and self-isolation measures, we most often come across cases of domestic violence. Concerning the procedure, disputes are mostly settled through Cognovit Actionem [Latin, He has confessed the action.] because it is an efficient way to resolve the issue, as well as to reduce expenses for the state.

Regardless of the fact that the majority of employees do not go to work, and some of them work from home, they will all be paid as if they were working. However, in the emergency state they are now deprived of the aid for improving their financial position which was agreed through the collective agreement and had been paid from the court taxes before the introduction of emergency state. Since everything is now on hold, the payment of court taxes is on hold, as well. We hope that when the judiciary starts working and charging court taxes, this aid will be again paid after the emergency state has been cancelled.

In line with this situation, I would say that we agreed to the suspension of some rights for the sake of health and life. Time will tell if it was right or not.

I would recommend everybody to take care of their health and their lives because they can't be replayed. All material possessions will be here after we've been gone. Regarding the trade union, it would be good if members were realistic and objective and tried to understand the times they live in. Personally, I think that after this pandemic is over, the future will be harder for all of us. Many citizens lost their jobs and are left without any income, but we still don't have a clear picture of consequences of corona virus. As social partners, after the corona crisis we will surely participate in the activities with our employer. For now there are no indications that this will happen.

Slađanka Milošević

President of the Trade Union of Judiciary of Serbia

