



## EFBWW and BWI urge MEPs to condemn exploitation of Vietnamese workers in Serbia

Today, the European Parliament (EP) will vote on a resolution on the case of exploitation by a Chinese company of 500 Vietnamese construction workers in Serbia. The EFBWW and BWI welcome the urgent debate in the EP, following their [joint call](#) last month, and now urge the MEPs to convict unanimously and clearly the abusive practices.

The case refers to the cruel and shocking way in which more than 500 Vietnamese workers are being treated in Serbia by the China Energy Engineering Group Tianjin Electric Power Construction Co. LTD, a contractor of the Chinese company Linglong International Europe Ltd.

EFBWW general secretary, Tom Deleu: “this is happening at the gates of the European Union, in a candidate country to the EU. We expect that the EP sends a strong signal and condemns this situation, and that the European Commission speaks out in clear and unmistakable terms. We cannot leave these workers behind and let them be mistreated and exploited.”

BWI General Secretary, Ambet Yuson: “The Serbian authorities have, once again, failed to protect foreign workers’ rights as stipulated in ILO labour standards. This is similar to earlier cases of Indian workers employed by the company GP Nikolić, Kraljevo in 2020, and many other groups of foreign workers. Serbia must end impunity to break the violation of fundamental workers’ rights in the construction and other sectors. BWI calls on the EU to support the EFBWW/BWI joint inspection to Serbia to develop a concrete roadmap to end abusive practices towards migrant workers”.

When working in the EU or candidate countries all companies – regardless of their origin - need to respect the fundamental human and workers’ rights. This situation also highlights the urgent need for a strong EU initiative on human rights due diligence and new initiatives to stop exploitation in chains of subcontracting.

The Vietnamese workers live and work in horrific conditions, facing forced labour, exploitation, trafficking, in an endless list of abuse. They live in unacceptable accommodations without proper sanitation, are exposed to dangerous health and safety conditions, did not have access to vaccines against Covid-19, had to hand over their passports, do not receive salary slips, work 9 hours a day for 26 days a month, just to name a few of the dreadful conditions.

We call on the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Serbian Government and local authorities to take action and end these serious violations of international labour and living standards and national law.

### Contact:

Paula Cravina de Sousa, EFBWW Press and Communication officer, +32 (0) 473 13 43 49

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**The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW)** is the European Workers’ Industry Federation for the following sectors: building, woodworking, forestry and allied industries and trades. The EFBWW has 76 affiliated unions in 35 countries and represents a total of 1,500,000 members.

**The Building and Wood Workers’ International (BWI)**, represents 12 million workers in the building, building materials, wood and forestry sectors in 127 countries worldwide.