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The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK), Confederation of Turkish Real Trade Unions (HAK-IS), Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK), and Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TURK-IS) are the four Turkish trade union organizations and are associated with the Syndicate of the European Trade Union (ETUC) and largely with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Collectively, we recognize the importance of working for a just transition from fossil fuels to a green economy that does not leave us out. We are all increasingly bearing witness to the impacts climate change is taking out on Turkish people and workers. Having firsthand experiences of climate devastation — including flooding, drought, and “sea snot” in the Marmara Sea which is killing the living creatures within and making the spread of disease easier — is making us see the vitality of just adaptations and mitigations to climate change. Turkey is committed to changing ways and adopting more climate policy in conjunction with EU dialogues. At the same time, Turkey recognizes climate change related initiatives as highly costly and requires economic support to effectively implement its new goals in its Green Deal Action Plan. Turkey is not the most climate forward country as it took 6 years for it to ratify the Paris Agreement but we are shifting. Through international organizations of trade unions such as the ITUC and the UNI Global Union, individual trade unions and their confederations are supported and trained to push for a just transition.

The Tez Koop-İş Union has held protests and is increasing commitment to fighting for a just transition to ensure worker rights, safe and good job security as economies and the climate are changing, and a variety of environmental protections. Part of what Tez Koop-İş was doing a few years ago was advocating for the Turkish Parliament to sign and adhere to the Paris Climate Agreement. Tez Koop-İş organizing is encouraging other trade unions to pursue a just transition as well as it is not something not all individual trade unions in Turkey emphasize. We all have room for taking further steps to prioritizing the just transition. Many of us strongly believe in the power, efficacy, and empowerment of working in international spaces and work to align with ITUC, ETUC, and UNI. The ITUC has international sway and influence and has climate change as one of their key issues. Working to make changes to the sites where people work and the training they have so workers are safe, secure, and well equipped for leading the transition away from fossil fuels and environmentally degrading methods of production is something at the forefront of concern for many trade union organizations.

The collective of Turkish Trade Unions calls on one another to hold each other accountable and support efforts in advocating for a just transition in Turkey, the EU, and the entire globe. Governments of wealthy countries ought to expand international support for all countries to be able to fund climate positive initiatives that support workers through the changing economic and environmental climate. We know how dire the situation is, yet we have limited resources. We call on Turkey to join the COP 26 Just Transition Declaration to put itself on the international stage as a country committed to supporting its workers and climate. This joint effort can lead to the economic aid the state requires for achieving its climate goals.

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