



Trade Union of Culture in Slovenia  
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## NATIONAL REPORT MAY 2012

For better understanding of Slovenian position in theatre and other performing institutions one should know the last year's political development in state. The center-left government lost its battle in September 2011, a year before the unexpired term, early elections happened on December 4<sup>th</sup>, but actually the winner, new center-left party Positive Slovenia didn't succeed to establish coalition. So center-right government with the leading Slovene Democratic Party took over the power, predicted drastic political and social measure, among others also the abolition of independent ministry of culture, what actually happened, though cultural public has strongly opposed.

The government suggested new severe austerity program in public sector in order to save 800 millions EUR in a year and that would cause deadlocks in social standards, education, health, science, public administration and of course in culture. The main measure was salary reduction for 15%, then complete ban to conclude copyright and service contracts without a special permission of Minister of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, stop to traditional workers' rights as add to hot meal and transportation to work, solidarity add, reduction of material resources from 40 – 60% and many others.

The trade unions of public sector strongly opposed to the program, private sector unions supported them. Both have stressed, that not only austerity program would save the economic crisis, but also investing in economy and jobs. The trade unions were prepared to realize the program in reasonable framework. At the beginning government maintained hard its position, until the public trade union begin to strike and all the other trade union confederation predicted the national referendum on suggested Law on the Balance of Public Finances.

The battle was stressful. The negotiations took place on two levels, one between governmental representatives and representatives of public unions and the other between government and the strike committee. They lasted 165 hours in less than a month the result was to low the governmental appetites on 260 millions EUR and 360 next year. Two acts were concluded, Strike Agreement and Agreement on Salaries, Allowances and Other Benefits. Strike Agreement contains: wage policy is moved to special agreement, the new measures in social policy of state are temporary and can be applied until the economic growth exceeds 2.5% per year. Unemployed workers receive aid back to 25 months, it begins with 90% of their salaries and lower gradually to 50%. May, 2<sup>nd</sup> remains holiday. Standards and norms in health, education, public administration are moved out of the law. The strike is paid. The trade union obliged, that they will not initiate a subsequent referendum. The Agreement did not accept two trade unions of policemen and one or two small trade unions.

The Agreement on Salaries, Allowances and Other Benefits determines 8% reduction of salaries, but on the same day must be realized the elimination of wage disparities as concluded in CA for Public Sector in 2008, negotiations about the value of wage classes

will conclude until end of 2013. Recovery for holidays are unchanged for 2012, for 2013 will be divided in three categories from 346 to 692€. Transportation to work in public transport is unchanged, kilometric allowance is 8% of gasoline prize. The allowance for hot meal is 3,52€. Solidarity add and anniversary reward are unchanged, allowance for separation from family over 70 km 140,54€, daily allowances for abroad are lower for 20%, for home 16€ over 12 hours.

Both sides were happy, Parliament accepted the Law with the correction from agreements. But the two police trade unions continue to strike, they have collected over 2500 signatures to initiate the subsequent referendum on the Law and presented it to the Parliament. If there will be no agreement between them and government, the president will be compelled to determine the collection of 40000 signatures to support the initiative and we may have referendum in autumn. Until then the realization of Law is automatically stopped.

How will the accepted solutions influence on theatre. As for salaries there will be small changes. They were left behind for 15%, so the employees first got that part and after that the salaries were lowered. But for other artists, who are on copyright and service contracts this means a disaster. Writers, stage directors, choreographers, scene and costume designers, translators and a lot of other artists are not employees but self employed workers. And this is a disaster for theatre managers too, because they do not know, how to hire those people. It is strange that the minister found exceptions for sport and science and not for arts.

We, Slovenes live in a ridiculous state, where the rulers swear on professionalism and at the same time do not recognize profession.

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