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Mr Anton Peršak
Minister of Culture
Republic of Slovenia

Paris, 16 December 2016

Re.: Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra

Dear Minister,

The International Federation of Musicians (FIM), founded in 1948, is the only organisation representing musicians trade unions worldwide. With members in more than 60 countries, FIM speaks for hundreds of thousands of musicians around the world and is recognised by major international bodies such as UNESCO, WIPO, the ILO, the European Commission or the Council of Europe.

On behalf of FIM, I wish to express our deepest concern about the situation at the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra (SPO), whose musicians are systematically subject to bullying and harassment by their conductor, Mr Lajovic.

The behaviour of Mr Lajovic and his lack of elementary respect towards musicians have reached a point that makes it impossible for the orchestra to perform its duties under his leadership. For the first time in the long history of this institution, the musicians of the SPO have therefore decided to go on strike. Nowhere in the world can insult and humiliation be considered an acceptable way to conduct the work of an orchestra – a basic principle that Mr Lajovic has deliberately decided to ignore.

It is the responsibility of the Managing Director and the Board to end this shameful situation and make sure it never happens again, in consultation with the elected representatives of the musicians. Regrettably, the management has remained unresponsive to the musicians' requests and it is thus no surprise that 90% of them voted in favour of the strike.

The conclusions adopted at the end of the 3rd International Orchestra Conference (Oslo, February 2014), attended by orchestra managers and more than 200 musicians from forty countries, stated in particular that "*Without dialogue between musicians and orchestra management, there can be no achievement of progressive and artistic aims.*" Clearly, abiding by this principle would have avoided the crisis that the Slovenian Philharmonic is going through.

I am confident that your Ministry will promptly take all appropriate measures to restore the respect that the SPO's dedicated musicians need and deserve, in the best interests of the institution and its audience. The international music community would not understand if this legitimate request remained unanswered.

Yours sincerely,

Benoît Machuel
General Secretary

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