



TOGETHER FOR A FAIR DEAL FOR WORKERS

EL/LR/TM/gv
Brussels, 05 December 2025

To Sophie Binet,
General Secretary
Boris Plazzi,
Confederal Secretary
[Letter sent by e-mail]

Full support to CGT in defence of freedom of expression

Dear Sophie Binet and colleagues,

We write to express our strongest solidarity with you and the CGT following the recent indictment of General Secretary Sophie Binet for alleged “public insults.” This action, initiated by the business association ETHIC after Sophie’s remarks during a televised interview, represents a deeply concerning attempt to silence legitimate trade union criticism.

Sophie’s comments, denouncing the recurring threats by major CEOs to relocate operations whenever taxation or social protections are debated, were clearly part of a vital public discussion and expressed through a well-known metaphor. Targeting a union leader for such remarks is not only disproportionate; it is an attack on fundamental freedoms.

What we are seeing is not a scandal over a phrase, it is the oldest tactic in the book: policing the tone of a representative of working people instead of addressing the substance of their message. Our colleague Sophie chose sharp words because workers are facing sharp injustices. Her job is to call out that behaviour clearly, not to wrap it in polite packaging which enables the powerful to feel more comfortable.

This case goes far beyond a simple legal dispute. It reflects a broader strategy of “lawfare”, the use of the law, not for the purpose it was intended, but for the intimidation of unions and all those who seek to speak truth to power. The objective is to restrict our role in defending workers’ rights.

But we will not back down. Freedom of association and expression are cornerstones of democracy. Attempts to criminalize union speech threaten these foundations and seek to make an example of the CGT’s leadership. This would set a dangerous precedent that we cannot allow to pass.

We stand firmly with you in defending trade union freedoms and the right to speak out against corporate abuses. Silencing the interests of working people is silencing democracy itself.

Yours sincerely,

Esther Lynch
General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation