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Caption 1. The President of CCM, PhD Zhivko Mitrevski on the press conference

Today in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy the 27th session of the Economic and Social Council (ESC) was held.

The meeting was attended by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Mr. Dime Spasov, the President of the Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia, PhD Zhivko Mitrevski and other social partners.

On this meeting the measures regarding the draft law amending the Law on Employment and

Insurance against Unemployment, the draft law amending the Law on Pension and Disability Insurance and the draft law amending the Law on Health Insurance were reviewed and unanimously adopted.

After the meeting the Minister together with the social partners held a press conference for the media. On this press conference the President of CCM, PhD Zhivko Mitrevski had his address.

In his address, President Mitrevski stressed the given support of the Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia regarding the adopted measures, which will help in the fight against the unemployment. He expressed satisfaction that these measures come into force immediately after the signing of the Decent Work Country Program and one of the first goals in this program is encouraging employment and competitiveness in the labor market. This project means practical realization of the previously adopted work program of the ESC, which incorporates employment measures.

Among other things he said: "For The Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia this measure shall mean achieving more goals, from one side will be an opportunity to encourage employment, and on the other side, strengthening of the launching of our campaign on the occasion of 1st of May when we have demanded safe and secure jobs. The most important for us as trade unions is that the status of unemployed persons placed in five groups shall be addressed for the first time. The first group of workers aged less than 35 years who have been unemployed for at least 3 months before and for whom companies are exempt from paying contributions within period of three years, with an obligation to keep the employees for one year. The second set includes people from 35 to 50 years, who are out of work at least 10 years, and for whom the exemption for companies is five years. The third and fourth set relating to workers over 50 years and the vulnerable groups, such as parents of three children or more, single parents, recipients of social assistance, victims of domestic violence, former professional soldiers, people with limited professional capacity. Fifth, for workers aged over 58 years no contributions till their retirement shall be paid. With the last two measures the status of an older category of workers for their employment, including the problem of the redundant workers is being solved".

For CCM and the unions particularly significant is that the employment of older workers shall allow them to come up to the required years in order to be able to use the retirement conditions. Often, due to closure of companies there have been cases in which workers lack 2-3 years in order to obtain pension.

Also for CCM and the unions it is important that we are speaking about employments for an indefinite period of time, which for us is extremely important in the promotion of the campaign "For safe and secure jobs."

President Mitrevski emphasized that this measure further allows employers to use the qualifications and expertise of these older workers because in the last period they have been facing with a problem of not being able to employ such older categories who are professional and well trained.

As a next benefit from this kind of measure President Mitrevski sees in encouraging of public expenditure, therefore this measure shall cover 150.000 new jobs, and thus new 150.000 families shall have the opportunity to improve their economic and social position and it shall ensure the revival of the economy.

At the end of the press conference, President Mitrevski said:

"We as a Federation of Trade Unions of Macedonia deem that this measure will be real and the employers will take advantage of these subsidies offered by the state, thus reducing the unemployment."