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TO :

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- **Mr. Giorgi Margvelashvili**
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- **Mr. Ivane Kiguradze**
Chair of the Committee for Education, Sport and Culture
of the Georgian Parliament
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Cc: ESFTUG

Brussels, 03 June 2013
Ref: MR/AKR/9482

Subject: The need to conduct an effective social dialogue in the education sector in Georgia

Dear Sirs,

With this letter I should like to return to the question of the need in Georgia to establish and to actively promote an effective sectoral social dialogue in education. I refer to my previous letter from 13 November 2012 and the Ministry of Education's kind response from 19 December 2012.

I went into details about the recent positive developments within the Educators and Scientists Free Trade Union of Georgia (ESFTUG) and I underlined its readiness to engage in a constructive social dialogue under the newly established government. I was very pleased about the Ministry's commitment to take into consideration ESFTUG's recommendations, to promote teachers' labour and social rights and informed about the ministry's initiative for school students (free students textbook) to promote access to quality education. I had a very good impression, too, of the Ministry's new approach towards the implementation of trade union activities. The first meeting organised on 20 November 2012 under active involvement of ESFTUG in the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia's (MOES) standing committees appeared to confirm this positive impression.

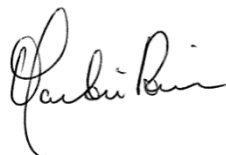
We have been in close contact with our Georgian member organisation and have discussed amongst others the development of social dialogue structures which is certainly a core topic for us. In the election campaign of the coalition “Georgian Dream”, one of the important issues was to promote development of the democratic unions. (and consider that the role of the ESFTUG will be promoted in the process of the Ministry’s initiatives). Along with the positive developments, establishing of the new union by the high level officials of the Ministry of Education Legal Entity “Teachers Professional Development Center” (TPDC) and for our understanding, such activities are not accepted as standards and practices. The real democratic unions are to express the will and defend the interests of members, but as the “leaders” of yellow organization “Union of General Education” have not been elected by members and represent the interests of employers. The founders and activists of that union present the MOES Legal Entity “Teachers Professional Center” and trainers school administrations have great power over teachers and school directors, During the meetings around the country organized by the TPDC, they have been making statements that the ministry favours their organization and not the real Union, the ESFTUG.

Furthermore, as addressed to you by ESFTUG, our member organisation is still highly concerned about the on-going activities of other trade union structures which obviously again aim to weaken ESFTUG’s membership and to damage its good reputation. ETUCE shares this very serious concern. Such organizations cannot be considered as social partners and they are not treated equally along with the democratic value established trade Unions, even more if those “teacher unions” were established and have been running with support the Ministry of Education and the new Georgian government as feared by ESFTUG in order to interfere with independent union activities. ETUCE asks you not to encourage but to counter yellow trade union structures alongside the recognised and independent teacher unions.

Allow me to emphasize once again that the trust of ESFTUG and also ETUCE in a crucial change of relations between the social partners in Georgia has been very high. We assume and hope that the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia after this first intensive period of orientation will reinforce the commitment it has given at the beginning of its mandate. We are convinced that an open, transparent and regular dialogue allowing the social partners to participate in the sectoral development processes is the main supportive pillar for the successful promotion of high-quality education structures.

I am looking forward hearing from you soon again.

Sincerely Yours,



Martin Rømer
European Director

The ETUCE, the European Trade Union Committee for Education is the European Region of Education International. It represents 135 teacher unions in Europe, i.e. 12.8 million teachers from all levels of the education sector in 45 countries. The ETUCE is a social partner in education at EU level and a trade union federation of the ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation.