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ETUCE

European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

Ms. Tamar Sanikidze
Minister of Education and Science
Dimitry Uznadze 52
102 Tbilisi
Georgia

Cc: ESFTUG

Brussels, 6 February 2014

Ref: MR/AKR/9578

Subject: Recent developments of relations between the education social partners in Georgia

Dear Minister,

In relation to our previous correspondence, let me introduce by saying that ETUCE has been pleased about the new and improved relations between the Georgian Government and ESFTUG, ETUCE member organisation in Georgia, after the October 2012 Parliamentary Elections. At the same time we expected that the Ministry of Education and Science would build on those first positive developments by establishing an open and constructive cooperation with ESFTUG. A strengthened dialogue between the social partners could surely lead to solid results in the soon future, both for the education employers as well as for the teachers. It could consequently be of great benefit for the entire education system.

Therefore, I regret to learn from ESFTUG that developments have been pulled in a different direction from that desired by the social partners last year. Apparently, relations between the Ministry of Education and ESFTUG are stagnating while the Ministry of Education seems to promote the newly created so-called trade union cooperation.

As mentioned at our meeting ETUCE does not recognize any yellow trade union structures. In this very case here, mentioned organization, the General Education Trade Union, was registered even in violation of the Georgian legislation and it neglects the fundamental trade union values. At our meeting you promised to look more deeply into this matter and to let us know about your decision. In the meantime I have been informed that the situation has not changed yet. Quite contrary, it seems that the Ministry's structural branches which are the Educational Resource Centers do still recognize and support the other so-called trade union. In several regions the so-called trade unions representatives (who act as trainers of the MOES Teachers Professional Development Center) have been

appointed as members of the Education Resource center's commission to hire ERC personnel instead of elected ESFTUG trade union leaders. ESFTUG President, Maia Kobakhidze, has informed you about these worrying developments.

Furthermore, ESFTUG and the newly created so-called trade union have been listed to the same platform. We ask you kindly to remember ESFTUG's rights and to recognize it as the social sectoral partner in line with the 2007 Supreme Court decision. ETUCE considers that without the legal recognition of the normative documents in relation to the sectoral agreement the overall cooperation between ESFTUG and the Ministry of Education cannot be satisfactorily achieved.

I would again like to reiterate our readiness to inform you about the practices of the European Union countries and support the elaboration of a draft memorandum.

I am looking forward hearing from you soon.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Rømer', written in a cursive style.

Martin Rømer
European Director

The ETUCE, the European Trade Union Committee for Education is the European Region of Education International. It represents 132 teacher unions in Europe, i.e. 11 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.