



Education International
Internationale de l'Education
Internacional de la Educaci3n

<http://www.ei-ie.org>

EUROPEAN REGION- ETUCE

President

Ronnie Smith

Vice-Presidents

Paul Bennett
Odile Cordelier
J3rgen Lindholm
Monika Konczyk
Galina Merkoulova
Ulrich Th3ne



5, Bd du Roi Albert II, 9th
1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel +32 2 224 06 91/92
Fax +32 2 224 06 94
secretariat@csee-etuice.org
<http://www.csee-etuice.org>

European Director

Martin R3mer

Treasurer

Walter Dresscher

ETUCE

European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

To: **Mr. Mikhail Saakashvii**
President of the Republic of Georgia
Administration of the President
1 Abdushelashvili St. Index 0103, Tbilisi
Fax: (+995 32) 438 819
E-mail: media@president.gov.ge

Brussels, 11th of March

Ref. RS/DP/9285

Dear President,

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) 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 European Union level and an industry federation of the ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. My letter regards the current status of relations between the Educators and Scientists Free Trade Union of Georgia (ESFTUG) and the Georgian Government.

Further to the resignation of the former EFSTUG President, Mrs Manana Ghurchumalidze, the ESFTUG Congress elected Mrs Maia Kobakhidze as a new President on the 25th of October 2010. Since then, Education International and the ETUCE have noticed a gradual deterioration of the relations between ESFTUG and the Georgian Government. The ESFTUG is currently losing a significant portion of its resources through a fall of its affiliates' dues income and some of its representatives have been the object of various individual pressures. Also, a lawsuit has been filed by a minority group within the ESFTUG to invalidate the result of the ESFTUG Congress. The court hearing on the case will take place on the 17th of March 2011.

For the ETUCE, there is little doubt that these issues are interconnected and that various forces are at work in Georgia to challenge the democratic outcome of the ESFTUG Congress.

As an EU Social Partner (Art. 154-155 TF EU) and an industry federation of the ETUC, the ETUCE supports its member organisations in Eastern and Central Europe and in the Black Sea region, notably in connection with EU accession, pre-accession and partnership programmes. In parallel, Education International, the International Trade-Union Confederation (ITUC), the International Labour Office (ILO) and the EU delegation in Georgia are actively involved in the monitoring of the developments regarding the ESFTUG case.

The ETUCE has been pleased to notice in recent years that through the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and as a member of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Eastern Partnership and the Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue, Georgia has demonstrated its will to achieve concrete steps towards the start of an EU accession process.

Within this context, I am confident that you will undertake the appropriate measures to ensure that the autonomy of ESFTUG is respected and that the government's policy towards this organisation is applied in full transparency. The ETUCE, Education International and the ITUC will continue to closely monitor any developments of this case in Georgia.

Yours faithfully,



Ronnie Smith,
President

Cc:

- Mr. Dimitri Shashkin, Minister of Education and Science of Georgia – Fax (+995 32) 438 812; Email: pr@mes.gov.ge
- Mr. Nika Gilauri, Prime Minister of Georgia - Fax: (+995 32) 93 10 51; E-mail: nmchedlishvili@geo.gov.ge
- Mr. Giorgi Gabashvili, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Science and Culture of Georgia – Email: ninomaisuradze@parliament.ge
- Mr. Aleksandre Kvitashvili, Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia – Fax: (+995 32) 770 086
- Mr Philip Dimitrov, head of the EU representation in Georgia delegation-georgia@ec.europa.eu
- Education International
- ILO
- ITUC