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TO :

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- **Mr. Ivane Kiguradze**
Chair of the Committee for Education, Science and Culture
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Cc: ESFTUG

Brussels, 13 November 2012

Ref: MR/AKR/9485

Subject: Establishment of an effective social dialogue in the education sector in Georgia

Dear Sirs,

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.

We should first like to offer our sincere congratulations on the outcomes of the recent elections in Georgia and all good wishes for your future work. We believe that you will meet all the expectations of the Georgian citizens and we hope that amongst others your government will now pay particular attention to the challenges in the education sector in Georgia.

With this letter the ETUCE wishes also to support its member organisation, the Educators and Scientists Free Trade Union of Georgia (ESFTUG). You will most probably be aware of the many difficulties that this teachers' union had to deal with in the past. It had to face severe interferences in its union activities starting from the attempt to challenge the legitimacy of the democratically elected President, Maia Kobakhidze, right after the

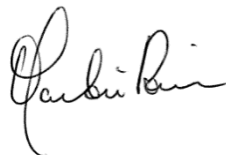
Congress up to the continuous pressure on and threats against teachers to hinder them from joining the union. There is little doubt that all of this happened with the aim to undermine the successful union organising process.

At that time, it became necessary for the ETUCE to start closely monitoring the development of its Georgian member organisation's problems. The ETUCE set up an international mission to observe the course of the court case leading up to a decision on the recognition of the legitimacy of the congress elections. It also used the opportunity to meet with other local and international stakeholders to discuss the increasingly complicated situation. In October 2011, I travelled personally to Tbilisi to meet then Minister of Education, Dimitri Shashkini, to discuss the establishment of normal relations between the Ministry and ESFTUG in accordance with Georgian Law of Labour and International Conventions.

The ETUCE is pleased that today ESFTUG places great trust into the future developments of labour relations under the new government. As social partner in education it will soon submit its proposals for its future work with the aim to improve education and to harmonise labour relations in the sector.

It is worth to emphasize the success of the teachers' trade union coping with all the serious problems and difficulties that have arisen since its Congress. The ETUCE would very much wish that the new Georgian Government will respond to the various hopes and aspirations of students and parents but also of the workforce in education and enter into a constructive dialogue with the teachers' union on all issues concerning the education sector in order to find a common denominator in the current situation as soon as possible.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Rømer', with a stylized, cursive script.

Martin Rømer
European Director