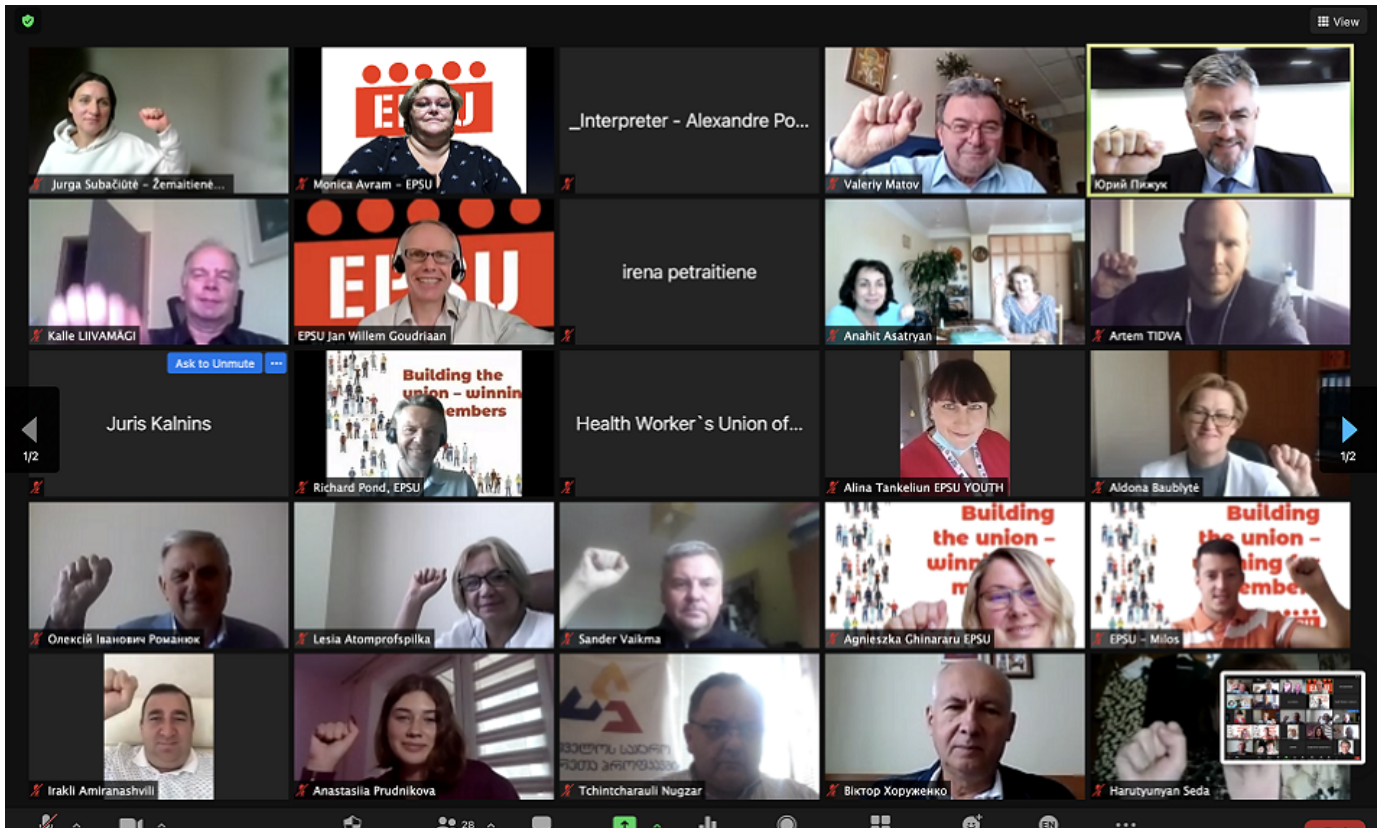


# Addressing the Covid and post-Covid world of work by unions in North East Europe



(21 September 2021) Unions continue to deal with the pandemic and its impact in the region. Vaccinations are progressing but in some countries at a slow pace. The political and economic situation is very difficult in Armenia with local level bargaining and hostility. Positive is that labour inspectors have been given more powers to check on employers, but many lack basic knowledge of the labour legislation and health and safety standards. Georgian unions report that Corona has had a negative impact on union membership and Latvian comrades underlined how concessions and tendering of public contracts is undermining pay and conditions as employers focus on the lowest costs. The Estonian government is considering making sectoral collective bargaining possible. The unions expressed their support for the striking public transport workers in Vilnius fighting against the privatisation of the services and the lack of negotiations over their pay and conditions. EPSU sent a message of solidarity and asked the mayor of Vilnius, Remigijus Šimašius, to come to the negotiating table with the workers and their union. Ukrainian unions thanked EPSU for its continued solidarity. The government has introduced new proposals in the Verkhovna Rada to take away the union properties. This will severely weaken the unions and allow the government to implement its reform agenda at the expense of working people.

The meeting received the women and gender equality committee's report and noted the youth report and discussed the Finance Working Group and action days forthcoming.

EPSU's Richard Pond briefed the unions on the negotiations on the European directive on minimum wages and collective bargaining in the Council. Progress under the Portuguese Presidency has been slow and not all Member States are yet committed to clear and real standards which will improve the situation for millions of workers. EPSU wants that the directive applies to all workers independent of their employer or working place. Good results in bargaining depend on the collective force of the workers and the unions will join the organizing seminar of the Federation. Secure and safe conditions at work is one of the priorities of the unions.

The meeting was opened by Yuriy Pitzek, President of the Ukrainian State workers union and the constituency. The EPSU General Secretary spoke about the priorities of EPSU and introduced the Draft Programme of Action of the PSI. The constituency meeting took place 16 September 2021, online.

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