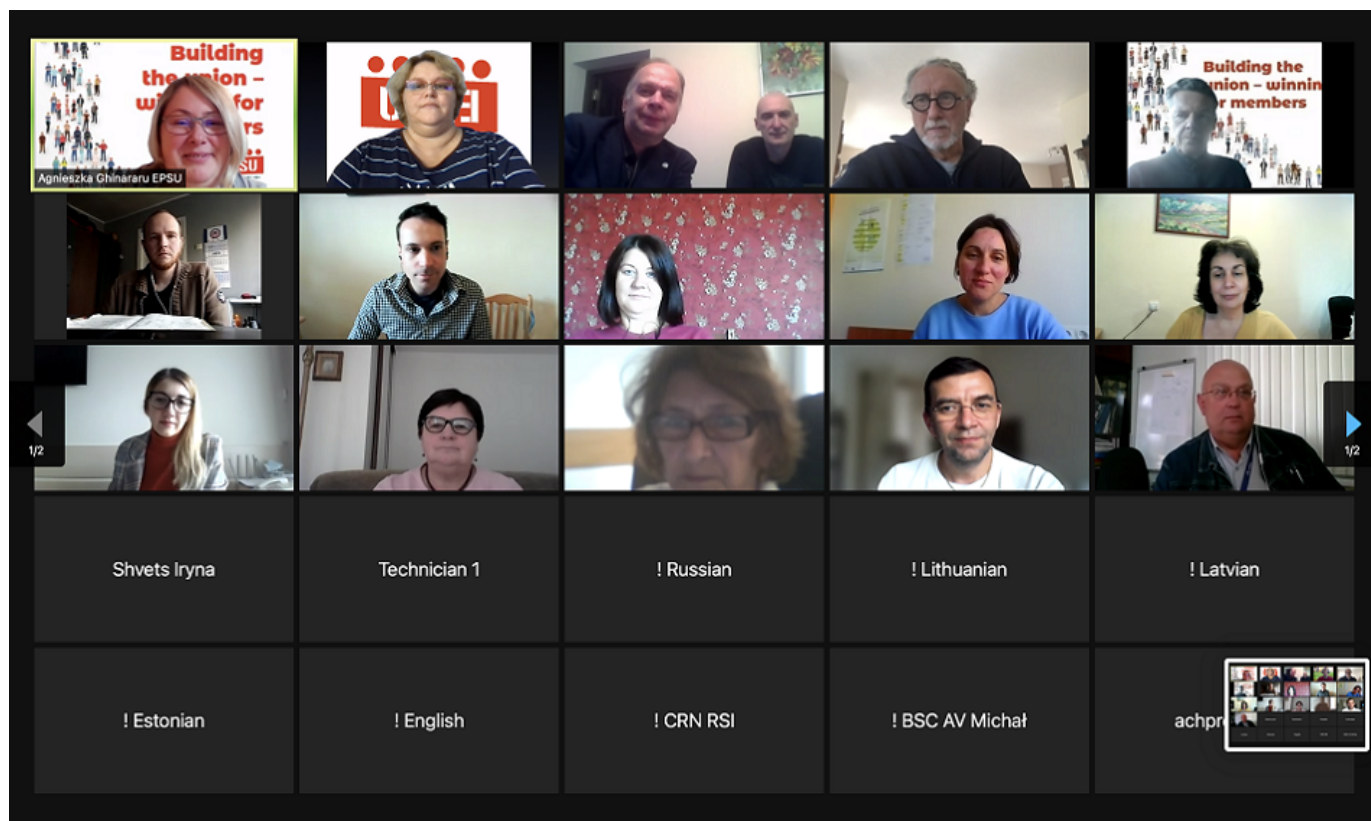


## Developing organising strategies in North East Europe



Last October, 26 participants from nine EPSU affiliates in Armenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Ukraine took part in the fifth online workshop on recruitment and organising strategies.

Important inputs during the workshop were provided by Dr. Greg Thomson, former director of strategic organizing in public services union UNISON (UK), Orlagh Fawl, director of strategic organising for public services union Fórsa (Ireland), Balázs Dvorácskó, organiser with the BDDSZ childcare workers' union (Hungary), as well as EPSU's recruitment and organising (R&O) Team.

The workshop debates covered: the reasons why workers join and leave trade unions; how to make passive workers active in resolving problems at work; and how trade union leaders should make sure that members' real interests are part of union's strategy.

The main objective of the workshop was to assist trade union leaders in discussing and drafting their own R&O strategies. Greg Thomson argued that a proper organising strategy has to be focused on concrete target groups. He underlined the need to “listen to members, tell them what the union is doing on their behalf and consult them on important decisions. Members need to feel a sense of their union and getting them engaged with the union means building their trust”. Greg also pointed out that a strategy should be based on accurate data and encouraged the participants to collect and analyse this when drafting their strategies.

Greg highlighted some of the main points from the discussions:

1. There was clearly a desire to increase membership through organizing which is the first critical step in developing an organising strategy.
2. Each federation had a clear idea as to how to increase recruitment and it is important that this is put down in writing to provide a marker against which progress can be judged.
3. A central membership database is important in allowing unions to identify where the membership can be grown and highlighting areas where membership is low. It can also act as a communication platform, allowing for group emails and texting.
4. The benefits of developing more activists need to be stressed, encouraging members to become more actively engaged with their union.
5. Getting members active means building their trust and communication is the key here – listening to members, telling them what the union is doing on their behalf and consulting them on important decisions.

EPSU has pledged long-term commitment to recruitment and organising and will continue working with organisations which took an active part in the workshop. Tailor-made assistance will be planned with unions, based on their written R&O strategies. The workshop will be followed up at the end of this year when the strategies (and their implementation) will be discussed and further developed.

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