

North East European constituency addresses Congress, gender equality and European integration



(25 June 2018) The changes to the labour codes, reform of social protection and health systems and the experience with privatization were some of the issues addressed by the union leaders of the constituency. The President of the Confederation [GTUC](#) and of [PERC](#) Irakli Petriashvili addressed the problems facing the unions in Georgia. Health and safety, pension and health reform, ensuring an increase in minimum wages and wages overall and the attacks on the rights to strike are concerns high on the agenda of the unions. The government has taken steps to rebuild the labour inspectorate but the role is limited to workplace safety issues. Unions debated the changes in Armenia. There is a new government that seeks to root out corruption. We will raise how [PPPs contribute to corruption](#) and that this is not a solution to corruption. Little is known about its views on the labour market and the role of trade unions. The Georgian unions have experience with a

government that thought the solution to corruption was to abolish all regulatory bodies and recreate some agencies with new staff. Georgian unions will be facing a new government shortly amid concerns that it might pursue further labour market reforms. In Ukraine corruption now permeates the whole economy. The political will is lacking to address it and the interests of the political and economic elites are very intertwined. Despite the social articles in the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement social convergence with the EU is not high on the agenda in Ukraine. The unions are not involved. Representatives of the Georgia government saw Georgian policy stringly orientated towards the EU already taking up proposed and new EU legislation as points of orientation for policy developments in Georgia. In several countries public service workers were benefitting from pay increases after years of freezes. The payrise campaign that emphasized that the wage difference between countries needs to be reduced through upward convergence was credited with having contributed positively.

The union leaders discussed the Congress, the programme of action and constitutional amendments and the participation in Congress. Condemnation of all forms of terrorism was raised as an issue of trade unions to address. With the representative of the constituency in the EPSU and PSI Women's Committee and with Eteri Matureli, vice-president of GTUC and of the PERC women's committee we considered the progress made on gender equality. The [Prague statement](#) was welcomed and a basis for further work. Another issue debated concerned Labour migration stressing the different angles and the importance of comprehensive approaches.

The constituency meeting took place 18-19 June 2018 in Tbilisi Georgia. The constituency brings together the union representatives from Armenia, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

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