

## **Concerns in RU&CA constituency about commercialization of care in Russia**

(Moscow, 17 March 2016) Mikhail, the leader of the Russian health workers union, underlined the growth of commercial care in Russia. Last year saw a growth of 19%. He stressed the negative impact commercialization has on patients and staff. It makes health and other care less accessible for many people and including in many regions. It does not address issue of staffing and resources. The union continues to organize the workers in the private care sector. Union leaders from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan reported the lack of resources and staff especially in regional areas where the number of doctors and nurses is very low compared to the number of people to be served. Both countries devote a relatively low % of GDP to health care. International organisations have urged the governments to increase spending. The unions joined the photo action in support of the EPSU campaign against the commercialization of health and other care. It will culminate in actions on 7 April. The unions participated in the Russia-Central Asian constituency meeting.

The unions also considered a range of other policies. They discussed:

- The current situation in Europe. The perspective on these developments depends very much from which country you look at it. It is important for the unions to strengthen our voice and work together.

The economic situation. The slowdown of growth in China, US, EU also effects Russia and the Central Asian republics, although in different ways. Sanctions are hurting workers and people. The unions argued they should be ended. And governments should invest in public infrastructure. Due to the economic problems fewer people migrate to Russia from Central-Asia. It also means that the amount of remittances send back is lower this hurting demand and growth in yet another way.

- Several countries have seen negative wage growth. Like many other unions the unions campaign for increases in minimum wages. Actions are undertaken for decent pay raises. Wages in public services are lagging behind average wages in all countries.

Labour codes are under attack in most of the Central Asian countries and protests have taken place in Kyrgyzstan.

EPSU priorities for 2016 and forthcoming actions and events. EPSU's work on trade

and taxation was commented upon. The Russian unions see few benefits from the membership of the WTO and are concerned about the impact of TISA. The new generation of trade agreements focused on regulation implies a loss of sovereignty.

- The next PSI Congress in October 2017 in Geneva. The focus on the region remains important. Migration is an important issue as Russia has 9-10 million migrants including an estimated million from Ukraine. Redistribution of wealth should be an important issue. The unions welcomed the inclusion of PSI in the new high level panel on health workforce of the UN.

The meeting took place 16-17 March 2016, Moscow. EPSU affiliates from Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan took part. The EPSU General Secretary participated.

The documents of the Russia-Central Asian constituency meeting, 16-17 March 2016, Moscow, Russia are available [here](#) (*password protected area*)

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