



# *inform* **contact**

## **NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS**

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April – June 2019

### **GCTU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SCRUTINISES RATIFICATION OF ILO CONVENTIONS**

The Executive Committee of the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) gathered in Moscow for a regular meeting 11 April 2019. High on its agenda was the issue of ratification and compliance with ILO conventions in the countries of the GCTU affiliates. The discussion showed that, over the past year, the region's trade unions had done a great deal of work that helped achieve positive results in the ratification process.

However, participants were concerned that the latest report of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations cites a significant number of ILO convention violations in countries where GCTU members operate.

The Executive Committee recommended that the national trade union

centres insist on a speedier ratification by their countries of major ILO conventions, and on their timely and fullest possible implementation in national labour laws. Affiliates should closely monitor the compliance with the ratified labour conventions, identify, publicize and eliminate cases of their violation by the employers and governments, and inform the GCTU and the International Labour Office of any such cases.

The meeting adopted a GCTU Statement on the Centenary of the International Labour, a GCTU Appeal in Connection with the Day of International Workers' Solidarity 1 May (see full texts below), and a Statement on the World Occupational Safety Day marked annually on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April.

Participants pointed to the increasingly urgent need for stricter legislation protecting elder people from all kinds of encroachments on their rights, freedoms, and property. Affiliates were encouraged to get

more actively involved in the work to improve the pension provision systems in order to prevent any pension reform from deteriorating the lives of the elderly.

The meeting ended with discussing proposals for the establishment of a permanent framework of videoconferencing between the GCTU and its affiliates.

### **GCTU GETS NEW MEMBER**

The meeting of the Council of the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) held in Moscow 12 April 2019 considered the application of the Kazakhstan Confederation of Labour (KCL) for affiliation with the GCTU. Having heard the report on the outcome of the GCTU special mission that had visited Kazakhstan to study the issue on the spot, the Council decided to grant the request.

GCTU General Secretary Vladimir Scherbakov reported on the activities of the Confederation in the period since April 2018. He said that, while taking part in working out socio-economic strategies and plans in their respective countries, the trade unions of the region insisted on the need to create decent jobs, increase the wages and pensions, and ensure the universal accessibility to quality education and health care.

However, despite this, the living standards and real incomes of the

larger part of population remain low. Poverty is withdrawing slowly, even among people who have jobs, while in several countries the number of poor is growing faster than the population. A number of affiliates had to rebuff attempts on trade union assets and property, defend their legitimate rights in court, and resort to organising mass protests of workers.

Council heard also a report on the socio-economic situation of the region's states in the context of current global challenges, presented by the GCTU Deputy General Secretary Natalia Podshibyakina. During the ensuing discussion, the heads of GCTU member organisations representing national trade union centres and sectoral Trade Union Internationals informed the meeting of the situations evolving in their countries.

The Executive Committee said the GCTU would render support to its affiliates in their struggles for the rights and interests of working people, and, whenever necessary, promptly organise solidarity actions.

### **GCTU STATEMENT ON ILO CENTENARY**

This year, the international community and, above all, the world of labour are widely observing the Centenary of the International Labour Organisation, the only UN tripartite body where governments, employers and employees represented by

trade unions cooperate on an equal basis.

Having endured the ordeal of the Second World War, the trying post-war development, the “Cold War” and the turbulent restructuring of world relations that followed in its wake, the International Labour Organisation has remained true to its values and ideals. These values imply that labour must be the source of human dignity; that labour is not a commodity; that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere.

Over the hundred years, the ILO has made a truly invaluable contribution to the establishment and upholding of social justice principles in political life and labour relations. The role it has played in the struggles for the eradication of forced and child labour, the respect of employees’ rights and trade union freedoms, the promotion of genuine equality of men and women, and against ethnic, religious, political and other kinds of discrimination at the workplace can hardly be challenged. The ILO has always been and remains an active advocate, developer and promoter of social dialogue.

It would be hard to imagine what the world of work would look like today if it had not been for the ILO, with its rich array of instruments developed and adopted in a unique tripartite dialogue. Collectively, the ILO conventions and recommendations are often referred to as the “world labour code.” They serve as refer-

ence points for labour relation actors, a starting point for legislative and standard-setting activities at national and international levels, as a support for trade unions in their struggle to protect workers’ rights and interests. Being aware of the particular importance of these documents, the General Confederation of Trade Unions has for many years been monitoring the ratification and observance of major ILO conventions in the region’s countries, and their embodiment in national legislations and labour relation practices.

The GCTU is firmly convinced that, whatever the circumstances, the development of international labour standards in the form of conventions and recommendations must remain the top priority for the ILO. We hope the Organisation will successfully continue improving its standards-setting activity, and expand and enrich its normative framework, raising it to a level matching the challenges of time.

Throughout its history, the ILO has been promptly responsive to new trends and turns in world development, primarily in what concerns the sphere of work and social policy. It was the first international organisation to launch a global campaign for a socially fair globalisation, unanimously supported by all trade unions of the Planet. Today, this is a mainstream goal in its activity.

The development and promotion of the Decent Work Agenda for all

should by all right be regarded as the ILO's main achievement in recent decades, as a kind of its calling card. The decent work concept is now a most in-demand universally recognised global goal. It enjoys strong support from the UN and its specialised agencies and regional bodies, the entire world community and, above all, the trade union movement. The efforts made by the ILO to get this Agenda implemented have placed it on the cutting edge of current world development, making it a leading force in the struggle to add a social dimension to world policies.

This is a new challenge it can successfully meet, given its wealth of experience and reliable instruments, such as the international labour standards, the Decent Work Agenda, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Global Employment Programme, and, finally, the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation. The GCTU and its affiliates, together with all world trade unions, are willing to actively assist it in a successful accomplishment of this mission.

The ILO enters its second century in a climate of geopolitical tensions, economic instability, conflicts and contradictions. With all the progress made in the sphere of labour over the past decades, the world is still a far cry from practical implementation of decent work principles and social justice. The Global Report, issued to commemorate its Centenary, speci-

fies the significant, unique role the ILO is to play in today's world of globalisation and rapid technological progress to ensure that employees' interests and rights are duly taken into consideration. We expect that the means and ways of achieving this objective will be clearly identified in the Declaration on the future of the world of work to be adopted at the 108<sup>th</sup> session of the International Labour Conference this June.

The General Confederation of Trade Unions warmly congratulates the ILO on its Centenary and wishes it further success in its activities for the benefit of all labour market stakeholders and, first of all, workers and their trade unions. We are positive that in its second century, the Organisation will be able to ensure that its ideals and values underlie all national, regional and global programmes aimed at improving labour relations and social policies in the interests of all workers, all peoples of the world

Moscow, 11 April 2019

### **GCTU MAY DAY APPEAL**

The Executive Committee of the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU), meeting in Moscow 11 April 2019, calls on the GCTU member organisations, all working people in the Newly Independent States to observe the 1st of May on a wide scale as the Day of International Workers' Solidarity.

This year's May Day will be held in a turbulent world, characterised by increasing geopolitical tensions, economic instability, outbursts of international terrorism. The armed conflicts have not subsided, while new hotbeds of tension keep emerging, whether in the Middle East, in south-eastern Ukraine, in Venezuela, or on the Indian Subcontinent. Transnational capital and financial markets are still domineering in the global economy, openly ignoring the needs of the real economy and the aspirations of working people.

Against this background, world unemployment has been growing, especially among young people, and informal employment expanding, with the rates of earned incomes and social protection falling down. The basic rights of workers and the principles of social justice are being trampled down. Trade union protests often result in stricter labour legislation and further blatant violation of labour law and international labour standards. Under the pretext of introducing innovative technologies, attempts are being made to impose atypical or precarious forms of employment, undermining the very foundation of the trade union movement.

Trade unions around the world are earnestly looking for ways out of this plight. We hail the call by the recent ITUC congress to launch a worldwide trade union campaign in order to change radically the nature of the global economy, and build a funda-

mentally different model of it, where the interests of workers, rather than corporations, would be in the first place. The GCTU and its affiliates support this call and believe that this new model must rest on the principles of decent work and social justice, equal and constructive social dialogue, adherence to universally recognised labour standards and human rights, with strict international control over the activities of TNCs and monetary institutions.

A complex, troublesome situation has also evolved in the countries of our region that are experiencing, although in varying degrees and for various reasons, difficulties caused by the slowdown in economic growth. Among its unfortunate consequences are the growing inflation and unemployment, the increasingly heavy burden of payments and taxes, including higher prices and rates of electricity, fuel, housing, and utilities. Despite the protests from trade unions, the retirement age is being raised, and wage arrears keep increasing. All this has led to an overall decline in the living standards and the quality of life. The monitoring conducted by the GCTU shows that social stratification and inequality are deepening almost everywhere, and in a number of the region's countries up to a third of the population languishes below or near the poverty line. In such a situation, there often appears a temptation to bury the principles of the social welfare state, as proclaimed in the constitutions of our countries.

The GCTU member organisations, like all other trade unions of the world, cannot put up with such a state of things. Regrettably, their struggles do not always bring the desired results. Therefore, to avoid further build-up of social tensions and mass discontent, we need a new and more active mobilisation of the region's trade unions, and tighter coordination of their efforts in protecting the interests of employees.

On the eve of May Day, the Executive Committee invites all GCTU-affiliated national trade union centres and sectoral Trade Union Internationals, all working people to mark the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 2019 by organising mass events under the umbrella slogans: "Decent work, decent life, social justice!" and "Let us say "No!" to corporate domination! Let us say "Yes!" to solidarity of workers and trade unions!"

We wish all trade unions in the region, from national trade union centres and down to primary organisations, successful struggle for the rights and interests of workers, for the triumph of social justice.

Long live international solidarity of working people!

Long live the First of May!

## **REGION'S WORKERS MARK MAY DAY**

**Armenia:** More than 2000 people took part in the march organised by

the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia (CTUA) in conjunction with its 19 sectoral unions under the slogans: "Decent Work, Decent Life, Social Justice!", "Strong Trade Unions Make a Strong Political Society!", "Strength of the Unions Is in Unity. Join the Trade Unions!", "We say No! to Emigration, Unemployment and Poverty!". The march ended with a rally that was addressed by CTUA President Eduard Tumasian, and other trade union leaders.

**Belarus:** This year's May Day was of a special nature, as it coincided with the celebration of the 115<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the country's trade union movement. A festive event organised by trade unions in Minsk gathered about 10 thousand people representing work collectives, veterans, and families with children. By tradition, flowers were laid at the foot of the Hero City Minsk stele whereupon celebrations continued into Victory Park, where President of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus (FPB) Mikhail Orda addressed the rally from the rostrum.

He stressed that legal protection and occupational safety and health remained the priority areas of trade union activity in the country. In the previous year alone, representatives of the trade union centre sent more than 41,000 warnings to employers who had violated labour legislation. The result was that 92 per cent of them were mended. With the involvement of trade union lawyers, the courts considered 146 lawsuits,

with 110 rulings being in favour of workers.

Participants were also warmly congratulated by the Minister of Labour and Social Protection Irina Kostevich and the General Director of the Confederation of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (Employers) Alexander Panasyuk.

The May Day celebration ended with a public concert involving well-known Belarusian dance groups and pop stars.

**Georgia:** On the Day of International Workers' Solidarity, trade unions held a protest action outside the government administration building in Tbilisi. Irakli Petriashvili, President of the Georgian Trade Union Confederation, GTUC, addressed participants in the event with a speech.

The main requirement put forward by the protesters was to ensure decent and safe work for everybody. They also expressed concern over the huge social divide which does not narrow despite the economic growth, and over reforms being carried out without trade union participation. The unions also demanded from the government a clear political agenda based not on populism, but on real measures to safeguard the vital interests of workers, including adequate minimum wages, unemployment benefits, youth employment, maternity protection and much more.

The rally ended up with adopting a manifesto. The demonstration was supported by the women's movement and a number of sectoral organisations of employers whose representatives attended the event.

**Russia:** On the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, a large-scale all-Russia action was held by the trade unions to demand protection of workers' social and labour rights and economic interests under the motto "For a fair economy in the interests of the worker!" Throughout Russia, 503 marches and 760 rallies were held in 80 regional capitals and 910 cities and towns, with over 3.7 million participants, including 1.3 million young people

An impressive demonstration took place in the Red Square in Moscow, with more than 100 thousand marchers representing work collectives of the city. At the head of the column were FNPR President Mikhail Shmakov and the leaders of the capital's trade union organisations. The Mayor of Moscow Sergei Sobyanin joined the union leaders at the demonstration.

### **GCTU PARTICIPATES IN IPA CIS COMMISSION**

GCTU representatives attended a meeting of the Permanent Commission on Social Policy and Human Rights of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly held 30-31 May 2019 in St. Petersburg. Taking part in the event were members of parliament

from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, and also experts, specialists, and representatives of the academic community.

Among other issues, Commission considered a draft model Migration Code for the CIS countries. Earlier, in April 2019, the GCTU had sent its comments on the document, and part of them had been taken into account in the new version of the draft. However, a number of other amendments, particularly important to the trade unions, had been ignored. As they spoke to the meeting, the representatives of the General Confederation of Trade Unions described this fact as regrettable and urged the developers of the draft to revisit them.

Participants also reviewed a Model Labour Code for the CIS member states. On this paper, the GCTU had submitted comments and suggestions last December, but many of them had not been reflected in the new draft. The GCTU representatives insisted on a repeated and closer examination of the trade union proposals.

As a result, it was agreed that the comments will be further considered at the stage of finalising the document

The sitting also considered draft Recommendations on the provision of pensions for citizens. Since the document was not yet final and looked rather as a comparative legal analysis of the current

pension schemes in the CIS countries, than draft Recommendations, Commission decided to send it back for revision with due regard for the comments made.

### **AZERBAIJAN: COOPERATION AGREEMENT SIGNED**

On May 8, 2019, the Azerbaijan Trade Union Confederation (AHIK) concluded a cooperation agreement with the National Trade Union Confederation of Moldova (CNSM). The document was signed by the leaders of the two national trade union centres Sattar Mehbaliyev and Oleg Budza.

During the bilateral consultations that preceded the signing, trade union representatives of the two countries shared views on the role of trade unions in the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals for the Period up to 2030, the ILO Decent Work Agenda and the Future of Work Initiative developed by the International Labour Organisation to mark its centenary in 2019.

### **ARMENIA: AMENDMENTS ON LAW ON TRADE UNIONS REJECTED**

The Parliament of Armenia refused to consider the bill on amendments to the law on trade unions proposed by Giver Persian, an MP from the Prosperous Armenia Party. Prior to that, the bill had received negative conclusions from the Government



and the Parliamentary Commission for the Protection of Human Rights and Public Issues. The rejection of the draft law was largely due to the strong opposition from the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia (CTUA) which had carried out an extensive awareness-raising campaign among the MPs.

The doubtful innovation of the initiative is that it proposes to permit forming trade unions without linkage to any specific workplace, something that fundamentally contradicts world practices that have developed over the last two centuries.

The author of the bill alleges that today the trade unions in Armenia are financially and even logistically dependent on the employer, which reduces significantly the effectiveness of their performance. The question of how to increase the independence of trade unions may, of course, be a pertinent topic for discussion, but the path chosen is not quite suitable for solving the problem. The results of the vote in Parliament shows that majority of MPs think the same.

### **ARMENIA: DECENT WORK COUNTRY PROGRAMME SIGNED**

On May 14, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the ILO, the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia (CTUA) and the Republican Union of Employers signed a National Decent Work Programme, outlining the priorities of technical coopera-

tion between Armenia and the ILO for the coming four years and the strategy for their implementation.

CTUA President Eduard Tumasian is confident that the national programme signed will be instrumental in making decent work an important component of the country's social and economic development. Its implementation will help specify the basic mechanisms for determining the minimum wage, improving the system of labour inspection, and increasing the efficiency of social partnership. The Confederation of Trade Unions intends to pursue more proactive policy to protect the workers' professional, economic and social interests.

According to the ILO Regional Office in Moscow, decent wages, healthy working conditions and reliable social protection can be provided only if ILO conventions are ratified and observed, and the implementation of the Decent Work Programme for Armenia will significantly contribute towards accomplishing this task.

### **BELARUS: MERGER OF SECTORAL UNIONS**

Three Belarusian trade unions - the Union of Commercial Workers, the Union of Workers in Consumers' Cooperatives, and the Union of Workers in Various Forms of Business merged 1 April 2019 to form the Belarusian Trade Union of Workers in Commerce, Consumer Cooperatives and Private Enterprise.

President of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus (FPB), Mikhail Orda, believes this to be a logical and natural process, carried out in line with the decision of the 7<sup>th</sup> FPB Congress held in 2015. By now, unified trade unions have been set up in the spheres of industry, transport, energy, environmental management, education and public service. These are large and strong organisations capable of defending effectively their members' interests.

In his opinion, the unions must pay special attention to such an acute problem as the wide spread of short-term contracts. The trade union monitoring conducted last year revealed that more than a third of all contracts are signed for a minimal period. "Short-term contracts," said Mikhail Orda, "are often used as a kind of hidden downsizing, when instead of going through the procedure of redundancy the manager just does not extend the contract. And as a result, the worker is left literally with nothing, without severance pay or a job. The unions cannot put up with such situations, and their position is quite clear: conscientious workers must enjoy job security.

### **BELARUS: PRESIDENT LUKASHENKO MEETS WITH FPB LEADER**

At a working meeting with the FPB leader Mikhail Orda held in Minsk 5 May 2019, Belarus President

Alexander Lukashenko said he expected the trade unions to get actively involved in the upcoming parliamentary election campaign and, later on, in the presidential election. "There is no more organised and cohesive structure in Belarus than our trade unions," he said.

Trade unions are also supposed to be more energetic in nominating their representatives to Parliament, since "these are experienced people representing work collectives". President urged the Federation of Trade Unions to take a more proactive part in monitoring the pricing situation in the country. He suggested the unions should devote particular attention to the cost of goods for low-income groups, such as labour veterans and pensioners.

FPB is an advocate of a clear-cut coordination of pricing policies in the country. Since May 2017, it has been following the price trends for 98 items of everyday consumer goods, on a monthly basis. The monitoring is carried out in all areas and regions – in convenience stores, large retail chains, and private and state-owned shopping facilities. Every quarter, the results are submitted to the government. The trade unions believe the pricing policies should be coordinated by a single body, for example, by the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade.

During the meeting, FPB's proposals for amending the Labour Code were

also discussed, in particular with regard to short-term contracts. The bill is presently being considered by Parliament. President said he supported the trade union proposals.

### **KYRGYZSTAN: FLASH MOB TO PROTECT FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION**

A flash mob was held in Bishkek 17 June 2019 to defend the right of Kyrgyzstan citizens to freedom of association. About 200 workers and trade unionists formed up a human line around the building of the House of Trade Unions, thus building a symbolic shield protecting freedom of association from outside intrusion.

The reason behind the action was that MPs had adopted in the first reading the draft law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Trade Unions”.

Prior to this, the issue was brought up for a public discussion, involving round tables and conferences, with sending appeals the initiators of the bill. However, not a single proposal or comment made by international organisations, law firms, public associations, non-governmental organisations, trade unions and ordinary citizens had been taken into account. Meanwhile, the bill runs grossly contrary to ILO standards (Conventions 87 and 98), the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic (Articles 4, 35), and the Labour Code of the Kyrgyz Republic (Articles 29-34).

### **RUSSIA: FNPR HOLDS 10<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) was held in Moscow from 20-22 May 2019. Attending the forum were delegates from all national sectoral trade unions and regional trade union federations, representatives of public authorities, employers’ associations, political parties, academia, fraternal foreign trade union centres, labour and trade union veterans, and leaders of international trade unions.

Presenting the activity report, FNPR President Mikhail Shmakov dwelt on the main areas of work carried out by the Federation in the period after its 9<sup>th</sup> Congress (February 2015-May 2019). He recalled, in particular, the key achievements made by the unions in recent years. They include, among others, the raising of the minimum wage to the subsistence minimum level; the ban to consider allowances and compensations to be part of the minimum wage; the return of salary indexation practices to the state sector; and the amendments to the initial draft law on the changes in the pension system. Speaking about the perspective, the union leader set out the FNPR position on solving problems that had accumulated in different spheres.

Participants of the Congress were addressed by Deputy Prime Minister

of Russia Tatyana Golikova, Speaker of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin, Minister of Labour and Social Protection Maxim Topilin, ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow, President of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs Alexander Shokhin, GCTU General Secretary Vladimir Shcherbakov, and President of PERC-ITUC Irakli Petriashvili. Addressing Congress with a video message, ILO Director-General Guy Ryder spoke highly of the Russian trade union centre and its leader.

Speaking on the last day of the Congress, Russian President Vladimir Putin stressed that the well-established interaction within the framework of social partnership had made it possible to implement consistently joint plans for solving social and labour issues, including those negotiated at their regular meetings with Mikhail Shmakov. The President said public authorities at all levels were obliged to be helpful whenever they deal with legitimate requirements put forward by the unions. "Our jobs are different," he said in conclusion, "but the goal is one and the same, and that is to ensure a decent living for our citizens. If we work together, we will accomplish this task."

The Congress ended its work with adopting the FNPR Programme "For a Fair Economy". Delegates also heard and approved proposals for amending the FNPR Constitution.

Mikhail Shmakov was re-elected President of FNPR for a new term.

### **RUSSIA: ACADEMY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL RELATIONS CELEBRATES CENTENARY**

A grand meeting of trade union public took place in Moscow 23 May 2019 to mark the Centenary of the Academy of Labour and Social Relations (ATiSO). The festive event brought together graduates of the Academy, representatives of all-Russia trade unions, regional federations of trade unions, the academic community, and foreign guests.

Today the Academy is an educational and scientific centre carrying out fundamental research in various areas of social and labour activity. The ATiSO was among the developers of the current Constitution of Russia, and initiated the inclusion of Article 7 in the country's Basic Law proclaiming Russia a social state. In his order of 1 May 2019, President Putin thanked the ATiSO team "for their great contribution to the training of highly skilled specialists for the trade union movement"

Speaking to the gathering, FNPR President Mikhail Shmakov said "the vocation of the Academy of Labour and Social Relations, as an oldest educational institution in the country, consists not only in the transmission of fundamental knowledge, but also

in the upbringing of studying youth. The Academy raises a young generation of trade unionists who will be able to make a significant contribution to the development of this country and work for its prosperity in the future.”

Prospects for the further development of the Academy are closely interrelated with the tasks of improving the forms and methods of trade union work, he added.

Today, the Academy carries out educational and research activity in 12 branch establishments, in addition to the central site in Moscow, where almost three thousand people study at the four faculties and the postgraduate school.

### **METALWORKERS' UNIONS MOVING TOWARDS CONSOLIDATION**

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2019, the capital of Belarus, Minsk, hosted the 7<sup>th</sup> extraordinary Congress of the GCTU-affiliated Trade Union International (TUI) of Metalworkers.

The delegates heard the report on the activities of the TUI Council and its member organisations carried out in a context of global changes characteristic of the period under review, and the report by the Auditing Commission. Congress also discussed and adopted an updated version of the TUI Constitution draft-

ed with regard for the Russian legislative amendments and the comments and suggestions received from affiliates. The Regulations on the Auditing Commission were also amended.

Nikolay Shatokhin was elected Chairperson of the Metalworkers TUI for a new period, while Lyudmila Konovalchuk, Andrey Fefelov, Andrey Chekmenev and Alexander Panychev were elected Deputy Chairpersons.

The Congress decided to admit the following organisations as members of the TUI of Metalworkers:

- Trade Union of Light and Textile Industries Workers of Kyrgyzstan;
- Trade Union of Workers in the Machine-Building Industry and Other Spheres of Business of Kyrgyzstan;
- Automobile and Farm Machinery Building Workers' Union of Moldova
- Trade Union Federation of Light Industry Workers of Moldova;
- Automobile and Farm Machinery Building Workers' Union of Russia
- Defence Industry Workers' Union of Ukraine.

The decisions taken by the TUI of Metalworkers on organisational issues presented another important step toward the implementation of the strategic course declared by the GCTU 8<sup>th</sup> Congress to upgrade the structure of the region's trade union movement and consolidate its sectoral Trade Union Internationals via merger.

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THE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS, GCTU, IS AN INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION ORGANISATION THAT WAS FOUNDED AT ITS FIRST CONGRESS ON 16 APRIL 1992.

ITS CONSTITUTION, WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE FIRST CONGRESS, WAS AMENDED AND SUPPLEMENTED BY THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE GCTU 22 SEPTEMBER 1993, THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE GCTU 18 SEPTEMBER 1997, AND THE FIFTH (EXTRAORDINARY) CONGRESS OF THE GCTU 26 MARCH 2004.

THE BASIC OBJECTIVES OF THE GCTU ARE:

- CO-ORDINATION OF ITS AFFILIATES' ACTIVITIES ON THE PROTECTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTS OF WORKERS, STUDENTS AND PENSIONERS;
  - ASSISTANCE IN THEIR PROTECTION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS AND GUARANTEES;
- AND
- ORGANISING TRADE UNION SOLIDARITY AND CO-ORDINATION OF ITS AFFILIATES' INTERNATIONAL POLICIES.

THE GCTU BUILDS ITS ACTIVITIES IN CONFORMITY WITH THE UNIVERSALLY RECOGNISED STANDARDS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, WITH FULL RESPECT FOR ITS AFFILIATES' COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE AND THE EQUALITY OF THEIR RIGHTS AND DUTIES.

THE GCTU AFFILIATES NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTRES OF ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN, BELARUS, GEORGIA, KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZSTAN, MOLDOVA, RUSSIA, TAJIKISTAN AND UKRAINE, AND ALSO 28 INDUSTRIAL TRADE UNION INTERNATIONALS.

THE GCTU IS READY TO CO-OPERATE WITH ANY OTHER NATIONAL TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS, IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR AFFILIATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

THE CONFEDERATION ENJOYS OBSERVER STATUS WITH THE CIS AND EURASEC INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES, THE CIS COUNCIL OF HEADS OF STATE, THE CIS COUNCIL OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, THE CIS INTERSTATE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE, ETC.

INTERNATIONALLY, IT IS IN CONSULTATIVE RELATIONS WITH THE ILO , THE UN DPI AND THE ECOSOC.

THE GCTU SUPREME BODIES ARE THE CONGRESS, CONVENED EVERY FIVE YEARS, AND, IN THE INTERVALS BETWEEN THE CONGRESSES, THE COUNCIL AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES IS EXERCISED BY THE GCTU AUDITING COMMISSION.

PRESIDENT OF THE GCTU IS MIKHAIL SHMAKOV,  
GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE GCTU IS VLADIMIR SCHERBAKOV

## DEAR READERS

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