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NEWS FROM THE GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

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GCTU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CALLS FOR SPEEDIER RATIFICATION OF MAJOR ILO CONVENTIONS

The Executive Committee of the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) held its regular session in Moscow 14 April 2015.

Participants discussed, inter alia, the draft Principles of Developing the Fundamentals of Labour Legislation (model Labour Code) for the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). The aim of the paper is to outline the main approaches to regulating key labour issues in the Union. The GCTU believes the labour law should help promote steady and sustainable development of the Member States, raise their living standards, and provide uniform conditions for work throughout the EEU. In other words, the EEU Fundamentals of Labour Legislation may serve as the basic legal act for establishing interstate standards. The EC endorsed the draft and decided to send it over to the Eurasian Economic Commission for consideration.

The Session heard information on how trade unions were monitoring the ratification and implementation of ILO conventions in the countries where GCTU affiliates operate. Participants concluded that, despite some positive advances, the performance was still a far cry from the desired goal. Particularly regrettable is the fact that Convention 102 concerning the Minimum Standards of Social Security has not been ratified by any state in the region. However, the meeting noted that, owing largely to trade union efforts, a favourable environment had been built for new ratifications, which in the near future might change the whole picture for the better.

Simultaneously, Session pointed to the violations of ILO conventions in the region's countries, particularly those mentioned in the latest Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. The Executive Committee urged the affiliates to remedy the situation, and recommended that they do their best to ensure that the conventions are ratified and ob-

served. In doing so, they were encouraged to enhance their cooperation with the International Labour Office in Geneva, and the Sub-regional ILO Offices in Moscow and Budapest.

The Executive Committee discussed the use of Internet information and communication services both by the Headquarters and the member organisations of the GCTU. The decision taken on the issue recommends that the affiliates should redouble their efforts to maintain their collective and individual presence in social networks.

The session adopted a GCTU Statement in Connection with the World Day for Safety and Health at Work marked annually on the 28th of April.

GCTU COUNCIL CALLS FOR SUPPORT OF REAL ECONOMY

The Council of the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU) held its regular session 15 April 2015 in Moscow's Palace of Labour.

The Council reviewed the Confederation's performance since its previous session last April, and urged the affiliates to continue their efforts to realise the principle "Reliable Guarantees to Decent Work and Social Justice!" as set by the GCTU 7th Congress. The unions must see to it that the post-crisis economic recovery measures do not lead to a social rollback, and that problems arising are not solved at the expense of employees and pensioners. It is neces-

sary to save jobs, work collectives, and decent work remuneration with fair taxes. Council stressed the need to keep the unity of the GCTU ranks, and strengthen fraternal international and inter-sectoral workers' solidarity.

The leaders of the national trade union centres of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia and Tajikistan, and some Trade Union Internationals informed participants of the current socio-economic situation in their respective countries or industries.

Following the discussion, Council recommended that the affiliates should further concentrate on building support for the real economy, stimulating employment and increasing domestic demand. Overcoming decent work deficits should be regarded as a most important anti-crisis measure.

The unions must step up their struggles for minimum wages not lower than the subsistence minimum, and support measures to curb the growth of super-high incomes and, above all, the bonuses and awards given to the top managers of banks and enterprises, highly paid civil servants and the managers of state corporations. Simultaneously, the trade unions will insist on balanced wage-rate and pricing policies to be conducted by the governments.

The Session approved the joint Appeal by the GCTU and the Coordinating Council of the Community of Public Organisations of Veterans (Pensioners) of the New Independent States in connection with the 70th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great

Patriotic War of 1941–1945. The anniversary celebrations, and also the preparations for them, will provide new opportunities for strengthening the friendship, mutual understanding and trust among the peoples who for decades lived in one and the same country, defended it, raised it from the ruins, and supported one another like close relatives.

The GCTU Council also adopted an Appeal on the occasion of the International Workers' Day, the 1st of May (see full text below).

GCTU MAY DAY APPEAL-2015

Slightly more than a fortnight is left before May 1 that is celebrated by working people of the Earth as the Day of International Workers' Solidarity.

All over the world, including our region, millions of people will take to the streets under trade union banners to take part in demonstrations and marches, rallies and meetings. Together, publicly and jointly, they will once again claim their rights, make their demands on the authorities and employers, identify the priorities for future action, and reiterate their resolution to fight for their interests, and strengthen the unity of the trade union ranks.

The current May Day, as in the previous years, will be marked in an atmosphere of degrading working and living conditions of most people on this planet. One serious consequence of the global economic crisis is the spreading poverty and social insecurity that have hit virtually all segments

of the world's working population. The unprecedented scale of unemployment has become a real scourge to the human race. But even having a job has ceased to be the source of a safe existence. Increasingly often, struggles waged by workers and trade unions against these ills meet with fierce opposition of the authorities and employers, with further infringement of labour rights and union freedoms.

The countries of GCTU affiliates also share common problems, such as the slackened rates of economic growth, the rising unemployment, especially among young people; the falling real wages, the impoverishment of working people, the heavier burden of taxes and fees and, consequently, a tangible drop in the quality of life. In addition, the socio-economic hardships in the region have been extremely aggravated by the geopolitical tensions that are being whipped up around the conflict in eastern Ukraine, where hostilities kill not only military personnel, but also civilian people, including elderly persons, women and children.

In these circumstances, trade unions of the region need a new and wider mobilisation to prevent a dangerous build-up of social tensions and mass discontent, protect the interests of workers and their families, and strengthen social dialogue as a key means of achieving their goals.

These goals include: decent work for all, reduction of poverty, wage growth outstripping the price rises; raising the level of employment through creating new jobs; equitable distribution of incomes; protection of human rights

and trade union freedoms; gender equality, and upholding other socio-economic interests of workers and pensioners, war veterans, students, and unemployed women.

This year's May Day will be marked only a few days prior to the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War, who made a decisive contribution to the defeat of Nazism and the restoration of peace on Earth.

Now that unprecedented attempts are being made to downplay the historical significance of this Victory, slander and question the role of the peoples of the Soviet Union, who made untold sacrifices for the sake of saving humanity from fascist enslavement, trade unions, as mass organisations of workers, must give a resolute rebuff to the falsifiers of history and do their best to stop the resurgence of fascism in any form in our countries or elsewhere in the world. We must also do all we can to win a dignified old age for war veterans and home front workers.

The Council of the General Confederation of Trade Unions, which gathered in Moscow for a regular session 15 April 2015, calls on all GCTU-affiliated national trade union centres and industrial Trade Union Internationals, all trade union organisations, all working people in the region to observe 1 May 2015 on a broad scale as a day of global trade union solidarity by organising mass events under the slogans and demands they believe currently important to their countries or industries.

Let us say together:

Decent work and a decent life to every worker!

Decent work implies decent wages!

Working people must not be poor!

Minimum wage is not a survival allowance!

Creation of new jobs is the right way to economic growth!

Say "Yes!" to compliance with ILO Conventions!

Say "No!" to attacks on workers' rights and union freedoms!

Dignified, affluent old age for veterans and home front workers of the Great Patriotic War!

No wars and violence against civilians!

Let the solidarity and united actions of world trade unions grow stronger!

Long live May 1, the Day of International Workers' Solidarity!

15 April 2015

CIS UNIONS OBSERVE MAY DAY

Responding to the call by their trade unions, workers in all countries of the region took part in demonstrations and rallies held on the Day of International Workers' Solidarity to make their demands on the authorities and employers.

Armenia. Over 2,000 workers took to the streets of Yerevan to participate in the march organised by the Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia (CTUA), carrying and chanting slogans, such as "Decent Jobs, Decent Wages to Workers!", "A Decent Present for the Youth, A Decent Future for the Children!", "Strong Unions Make a Strong Civil Society!" Participants demanded that

the Government put an end to poverty and solve the unemployment problem.

Georgia. On the eve of the International Workers' Day, the Georgian Trade Union Confederation issued a manifesto presenting its own assessment of the socio-economic situation in the country, and requirements and proposals set out by the unions.

Belarus. Massive May Day events were held all over the country. Representatives of trade unions, state and local authorities, labour veterans and students came to National Flag Square in Minsk to honour workers' dynasties. President of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus Mikhail Orda handed monetary awards to 14 front-rank workers and two organisations whose employees had shown high production results.

A Labour Glory Hall was inaugurated in the Trade Union Palace of Culture in Minsk, and a festive concert was held in the Capital's Victory Park.

Kyrgyzstan. Almost six thousand people carrying banners marched to the sound of a brass band from the Central Office of the Kyrgyzstan Federation of Trade Unions (KFTU) to the Government House, where the a mass May Day meeting took place.

Russia: This year's national May Day action was held under the banner of the 110th Anniversary of the Russian trade union movement and the 25th Anniversary of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia. More than three million people all over

the country took part in the marches, demonstrations and rallies organised by the unions under the main slogan "Give Us Double Wages to Match Price Rises!"

The most massive demonstration was held in Moscow where almost 140 thousand representatives of the capital's work collectives marched through the Red Square

Rallies, marches and other events dedicated to May Day, took place in all countries of the region.

ARMENIA: UNIONS WARN AGAINST ELECTRICITY PRICE RISES

The Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia (CTUA) has expressed grave concern over the upcoming increase in electricity rates.

A statement issued by CTUA says all recent increases of gas and electricity rates have always entailed higher prices of foodstuffs, consumer goods and services, which inevitably resulted in dropping standards of living. This could have been prevented by adopting a law on the indexation of wages that would help regulate the purchasing power of the minimum wages. The trade union centre believes the situation is aggravated by the fact that the country has not yet legally established the contents and structure of the minimum consumer basket, based on which the minimum wages, pensions, allowances and other social benefits should be calculated. Meanwhile, a third of Armenia's population today is poor.

The unions warn that any further chain of price rises triggered by increasing electricity rates may aggravate the plight of not only workers, but also almost 500,000 pensioners and 114,000 families living on subsistence benefit.

Article 34 of the Armenian Constitution says every citizen is entitled to an adequate standard of living. However, this right is undermined by the incessant price increases. Therefore, CTUA considers it extremely important to activate social and political mechanisms that could downplay the growth of social tensions in cases when electricity rates are raised.

BELARUS: FPB CONGRESS ADOPTS NEW PROGRAMME

The 7th Congress of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus (FPB), which brought together more than 500 delegates from across the country, took place in Minsk 22 May 2015.

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko participated in the event as a delegate. Speaking from the Congress rostrum, he said FPB plays an important role in Belarusian society as the most massive and influential nongovernmental organisation in the country. He also stressed the need of organising in private sector enterprises. "By the middle of 2016, every work collective in this country must have a trade union organisation", he concluded.

Attending the Congress were also other senior state officials, representatives of the managers' community, and foreign trade union delega-

tions from 14 countries. Among the speakers was General Secretary of the General Confederation of Trade Unions Vladimir Scherbakov.

The Congress adopted a Programme of FPB Activity for 2015-2020.

Bro Mikhail Orda was elected President of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus for a new term of office.

BELARUS: MAJOR RETAIL CHAIN GETS TRADE UNION

The constituent meeting held in April 2015 by employees of the retail chain *Euroopt Ltd* decided to build a trade union organisation in the company, electing the company's socio-economic adviser Vladimir Poluyan as its chairman.

The *Euroopt Ltd* is a largest private employer in Belarus that has more than 300 supermarkets across the country employing over 30 thousand people. The management has from the beginning welcomed the workers' initiative to establish a trade union. In particular, the *Euroopt* Director-General said to participants: "We in the management have also understood that a collective numbering more than 30 thousand employees needs a union. For having a trade union will help us further rally the team, and enable our employees to enjoy additional benefits and guarantees."

Creating trade union organisations in all larger private sector enterprises is now a top priority for the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus, and the problem was discussed at the FPB

7th Congress held in Minsk 22 May 2015 (see above).

GEORGIA: UNION DEFENDS SACKED WORKERS

The Batumi City Court granted the appeal by nine former employees of the Ajara Branch of the *Georgian Mail*, all of them union members illegally dismissed in February 2013 upon the expiration of their month-long employment contracts which they considered humiliating.

According to the Georgian Trade Unions Confederation (GTUC), the nine employees will be reinstated with full payment of the missed days for the whole period starting with the date of their dismissal. They will also be exempted from paying the state duty, as this charge will be imposed on the *Georgian Mail* company.

The interests of the laid-off workers were defended in court by the leader of Georgia's Communications Workers' Union Suliko Mashiah and the Chair of the Joint Trade Union Committee of the *Georgian Mail* Marina Razmadze. Representatives of the local trade union organisation attended the trial in solidarity.

Postal employees believe this victory has brought great satisfaction not only to the illegally sacked workers, but also to all union members.

KAZAKHSTAN: FPRK FACING UP TO NEW CHALLENGES

Over 200 delegates representing all sectors of the economy and all

regions of the country took part in the 14th Congress of the Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan (FPRK) held 10 June 2015 in Astana.

The invited guests included social partners of the trade unions, leaders of political parties, Government members, MPs, and representatives of international organisations. Attending the Congress was also General Secretary of the General Confederation of Trade Unions Vladimir Scherbakov who spoke to the delegates.

“This year has special significance for this country's trade unions. It is the year when we celebrate the 110th Anniversary of the Kazakhstan unions and the 25th Anniversary of our Federation of Trade Unions. These two momentous dates make a framework for a whole epoch - from the emergence of the trade union movement and to its involvement in the construction of a new independent state. Alongside of the government and business, the unions have been actively contributing to the development of current Kazakhstan society,” said FPRK President Abelgazi Kusainov in his report to the Congress.

Both the novel situation in the country and the active involvement of Kazakhstan in globalisation and integration processes call for reform in the trade union movement. In this context, the Trade Union Federation has completed the process of modernising its structure. The new Law “On Trade Unions” gave a fresh powerful impetus to the development of social dialogue at all levels of social partnership, the union leader went

on to say. In addition, the General Agreement for 2015-17 signed in December 2014 by the Government, the republican organisations of workers and the republican associations of employers embraces all issues of social and labour sphere, and delineates clearly the obligations of each actor of social partnership.

Delegates summed up the activities of the Federation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Kazakhstan over the past five years, and discussed and approved the Strategy for Action by the trade union centre for the period 2015-20. The Congress concluded its work with the adoption of resolutions, such as “Ensuring a decent subsistence minimum level”, “Prevention and settlement of labour disputes and conflicts – as a Challenge of Our Time”, “Trade Unions for Safe Work” etc.

Bro Abulgazi Kusainov was unanimously elected President of FPRK.

KYRGYZSTAN: UNIONS REJECT GOVERNMENT BILL

President of the Kyrgyzstan Federation of Trade Unions (KFTU) Asylbek Toktogulov sent an appeal to affiliates urging them to respond to the forthcoming changes and amendments to the Labour Code proposed by the Government.

In an alleged attempt to promote the development of the private sector and strike a balance between the rights of employers and employees, the Government, without consulting the unions, has prepared a draft law that will seriously infringe the rights

of workers in private enterprises and organisations. They will actually be stripped of legal guarantees of overtime pay, and increase pay for working at night, on holidays and on weekends. Compensation for work on weekends will be paid only by agreement of the parties, which means that the decision will be left to the discretion of the employer.

In the case a dismissal is initiated by the employer, the severance pay will be reduced from today's two average monthly earnings to a mere basic salary. All private sector employees will be employed on short-term contracts. On their expiry, the employees may be dismissed without notice and payment of benefits, which is contrary to Convention No.158 and Recommendation No. 166 of the International Labour Organisation.

The provision requiring that dismissal of employees should be negotiated with the trade union will not apply to workers of private enterprises and organisations. The bill also proposes that Article 414 should be excluded from the Labour Code, as it does not set a limitation period for the recovery of unpaid wages.

All this creates a legal absurdity. Should the bill be adopted, the employees of private enterprises will find themselves in a discriminatory position as compared with their counterparts in the public sector.

Trade unions reject flatly such “reform”, as they believe it will deal a serious blow to the rights and social guarantees of large masses of working people. KFTU called on its affiliates

to send their objections, comments and suggestions to the Ministry of the Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic.

MOLDOVA: UNIONS DEMAND ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION

In early April, the National Confederation of Trade Unions of Moldova (CNSM) once again demanded that the government speed up the establishment of a national tripartite commission on consultation and collective bargaining to deal with the solution of problems arising in the labour and socio-economic spheres, and with the development of social partnership at the national, industrial and territorial levels.

Trade unions are concerned that, even though sufficient time has passed since the parliamentary elections and the formation of the government, the Tripartite Commission has not yet been appointed.

Meanwhile, one of the tasks of this body is to consider the annual draft laws on the national budget, the state social insurance budget and the mandatory health insurance funds before they are approved by the government. This time, however, the absence of the Commission prevents the unions from getting access to these bills, crucially important to workers, and, for this reason, from giving their opinion on them.

The unions have warned that, if the government fails to meet their demands, they reserve the right to resort to other actions stipulated by law.

RUSSIA: FNPR CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT

A meeting of the General Council of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) took place in Moscow 27 May 2015, with members of the Government, representatives of the employers' associations, and State Duma deputies attending the event as guests.

Both the report by FNPR President Mikhail Shmakov on follow-up to the FNPR 9th Congress and the speeches by General Council members were highly critical of the anti-crisis measures taken by the Government and the Central Bank of Russia and their impact on the social and labour sphere. At a time when workers' wages are rapidly dropping and consumer prices are rising, the Government has chosen to act bypassing the Russian Tripartite Commission for Regulating Social and Labour Relations, and in this way ignore the interests of employees and employers. This line of behaviour depreciates the essence of social partnership.

In 2014, the Russian economy was confronted with serious external challenges, such as the two-fold drop in oil prices, the reduction of export cost volumes, the outflow of capital, the imposition of economic sanctions, the closure of access to capital markets, and the sizeable decline in investment. These are not short-term challenges, and the authorities, business and trade unions must learn how to work in the new economic conditions.

Concluding his report, Mikhail Shmakov said: “In a situation of economic crisis, trade unions are obliged to protect the real incomes of workers, their wages and salaries, their jobs. We must not allow the government to rummage the pockets of workers or pensioners in search of money for solving its economic problems. But we shall be able to do so, only if we manage to make the structure of trade unions more efficient.”

The session approved a plan of practical measures to implement the decisions of the FNPR 7th Congress. Participants said the FNPR Programme “Decent work as the basis of human well-being and the development of the country”, resolutions and other Congress documents give a trade union assessment of the socio-economic relations in Russia, and identify the key areas of trade union activity. The General Council stressed that the election campaign of 2015-16 should be used by the unions to further strengthen their organisational unity, improve their personnel policy, and enhance the responsibility of member organisations for the implementation of decisions taken by the FNPR collective bodies.

RUSSIA: FNPR INSISTING ON CHANGE IN ECONOMIC POLICY

The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) issued a Statement addressed to the Government of Russia, which reads as follows.

“The government is economising on the poor!

Recently, the Russian Government has been trying to save. However, all their “economical” proposals and decisions, in fact, boil down to the attempts to reduce the costs of salaries and pensions.

Public sector employees do not get any salary indexation.

Pensioners have been told to forget about the indexation of pensions, or rest satisfied with an indexation whose amount is significantly lower than the inflation rate.

For more than five years, the unemployed have been living on a benefit from 850 to 4900 roubles (\$15.5–90).

Once again, it has become popular to recite mantras about the need to raise the retirement age.

Simultaneously, various estimates suggest that the real incomes of Russian citizens have decreased over the year by 25-50 per cent.

Taken together, these facts testify to a deliberate government policy aiming to reduce the social obligations of the Government in a situation of a seriously rising prices and rates.

All proposals as to rendering support to the real sector of the economy, or creating a system of affordable cheap loans to enterprises are nothing but declarations. The lack of fluid capital ruins Russian companies, and destroys jobs.

The refusal to index-link salaries and pensions, together with the intention

to raise the retirement age is a blow the Russian Government deals on the budgetary sector.

The refusal to support the Russian industry is a blow the Government deals on the jobs and incomes of workers in the real economy.

Given the instable foreign context, any attempt to build the economy on the prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund will once again doom this country to a collapse and upheavals that we had experienced in the 1990s. Such a policy has already brought about bankrupt enterprises, lay-offs and switchovers to part-time employment, significant drops in workers' incomes, and increased social tensions.

We demand that the Government change its economic policy, rather than look for crumbs in workers' pockets!"

UKRAINE: UNIONS COME INTO NATIONWIDE LABOUR DISPUTE

The Joint Representative Body (SPO) of All-Ukrainian Trade Unions and Trade Union Associations at its meeting 27 April 2015 decided to start a collective labour dispute with the Cabinet of Ministers and the joint organisation of employers' associations.

Having outlined the current situation in the sphere of social dialogue, SPO Chairman and the leader of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU), Grigoriy Osoviy, informed participants about the government's and employers' response

to the trade union requirements and proposed specific steps to be taken by the unions in the circumstances.

With the employers' reluctance to reveal the true sum of wage arrears and the failure of the Cabinet of Ministers to meet trade union demands, the unions decided to enter into a collective labour dispute (conflict) with the government and employers at the national level.

The decision on the launch of labour dispute (conflict) came into force immediately after it was adopted at the meeting

UKRAINE: FIGHT FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Trade unions organised picket lines and a mass rally outside the building of the Cabinet of Ministers in Kyiv 27 May 2015 in support of workers' constitutional rights. Vice President of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU) Sergiy Kondryuk explained to the audience why the unions were forced to resort to the mass protest actions that are planned to be held in three stages.

The first stage has involved over two thousand representatives of the production sector trade unions and district FPU organisations. At the second stage, they will be joined by trade union organisations affiliated to the Joint Representative Body (SPO) of All-Ukrainian Trade Unions, and other unions. Participants of the third stage will include, besides the unions, representatives of other

civil society organisations representing the interests of working people, veterans, participants of the war in Afghanistan, Chernobyl liquidators, and so on.

The unions demanded that the government:

- uphold the Constitution and pay employees salaries as defined by law;
- pay promptly the wage arrears; and put an end to wage delays;
- stop “confiscating” 15 per cent of pensions for military purposes;
- restore the possibility of spa treatments for those who work in hazardous and hard working conditions; and
- get involved in constructive social dialogue.

Speaking to the gathering, FPU President Grigoriy Osoviy said “Over the last year, we have lost 1 200 thousand jobs. Each family out of this one million has plunged into misery. Besides, people have lost a sizeable portion of their wages because of the devaluation of the hryvnia and inflation, and all of us have been thrown back to the year 2007 ... More than that, the government is picking the pockets of old people by imposing a tax on their miserable pensions. Five hundred lives are lost every year in workplaces, while another 10-12 thousand workers get crippled because of the inadequate occupational health and safety.”

In this situation, the SPO of All-Ukrainian Trade Unions made the responsible decision to enter into a collective labour dispute with the government. But the negotiations proceed

with difficulty, as the government is shirking the responsibility for workers’ constitutional rights. If this continues, the unions will call a large-scale all-Ukrainian strike, unprecedented in the country’s history.

“ELEKTROPROFISOYUZ” DISCUSSES SOCIAL AND LABOUR RIGHTS

The Council of the International Trade Union Association “Elektroprofsoyuz” (“Electrounion”), held its regular session in Moscow 13 May 2015 to consider the problem of protecting the social and labour rights and interests of union members.

Reports on the socio-economic situation in their respective industries were made by energy union leaders from Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Tajikistan.

The Council called on the affiliates to tighten control over the observance of labour legislation, and duly reveal, prevent, and make public any violation of laws or workers’ rights and interests by the employers. Particular attention was paid to the need to actively support the national trade union centres in their efforts to get a speedy ratification of the most important ILO conventions.

The Council approved the plan of activities for 2015 and decided to convene the next regular conference of the TUI “Elektroprofsoyuz” in the first quarter of 2016.

Immediately after the Council session on 14 May 2015, the leaders of

the “Elektroprofsoyuz” affiliates held a consultative meeting to discuss the current socio-economic situation in the electric power, electrical and peat industries of CIS countries. The speakers at the meeting included GCTU General Secretary Vladimir Scherbakov and Director General of Inter-Republic Electro-technological and Instrument-Making Corporation Oleg Anfimov.

Participants in the Consultative Meeting exchanged information on the activities they had organised to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945.

The meeting concluded its work with the adoption of the Final Document.

FORESTRY UNION LEADERS MEET IN BELARUS

From 9-11 June 2015, Belarus hosted a field session of the Central Council of the Federation of Timber and Related Industries Unions of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Participating in the meeting were members of the Council or their authorized representatives from Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, the City of Moscow, and the Republic of Tatarstan.

For the first two days, participants were acquainting themselves with trade union activity at several enterprises, including one of largest wood-processing enterprises in Belarus “Borisovdrev”, the Republican Forest

Centre for Selection and Seed Growing, the Borisov Pilot Forestry and others.

The delegation met with the Belarusian Minister of Forestry Mikhail Amelyanovich, who praised the Federation for its willingness to cooperate and teamwork in a business-like manner within the framework of the Inter-Governmental Council for the Timber-Processing Complex and Forestry of the CIS, particularly when social issues are on the agenda.

The agenda of the Central Council session, which was opened and chaired by President of Federation Viktor Karnyushin, included 13 issues. The decision taken in conclusion encourages the affiliates to strengthen their control over the observance of labour legislation and the implementation of sectoral collective agreements and accords, step up their efforts to establish the minimum wage not lower than the subsistence minimum, and insist that the minimum work remuneration should be calculated on the basis of the minimum consumer budget.

The meeting heard and approved the activity report of the Federation’s Central Council for 2014, and adopted the work plan and budget for 2015. It was decided to open an office of the Federation in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan.

The Council decided to convene the 5th ordinary Congress of the CIS Federation of Timber and Related Industries Unions in Moscow, 2 June 2016.

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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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