

CONFEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT
TRADE UNIONS IN BULGARIA
(CITUB)

CITUB ACTION PLAN
2017-2022





CITUB

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Our attempts to get out of the prolonged economic depression, indicated by two consecutive years of GDP growth of over 3% and smooth recovery of the employment and labour market faced serious political turmoil, threatening to turn into a permanent political crisis. Within a period of five years, four regular and three caretaker governments ruled the country.

The frequent changes in power were a trial not only for the Bulgarian democracy; they caused serious turbulence in determining the internal political priorities, solving urgent problems such as poverty, social exclusion and huge income disparities. Assessing the political, economic and social situation in the country and the importance of this period, in which the preparation of Bulgaria for the EU presidency (from the beginning of 2018) should be accelerated, CITUB is clearly aware of the huge challenges and risks.

At the same time attempts to separate Europe into “two-speed Europe”, the emergence of centrifugal forces and the risk of violating the EU integrity, pose serious risks to Bulgaria in terms of consolidation of its peripheral position and role. Many questions arise with regard to community cohesion policy and this is undoubtedly one of the main challenges in economic and social terms. Solidarity is seen increasingly as a burden and not as a political and financial investment in overall stability.

In the process of globalization and on the eve of Industrial Revolution 4.0, a key issue for us remains: how to combine the two seemingly contradictory processes - digitization of economy and humanization of work. Solving this complex dilemma will enable us to achieve a maximum economic effect (productivity and growth), while maintaining the genuine human values related to opportunities for decent work, self-improvement and maintenance of prosperity and well-being.

Countries that can first afford new technologies, will in practice secure themselves with lower labour costs and higher productivity. In some areas, however, employees will suffer from a serious mismatch between the skills they have and the ones required for their position. In developed economies, technological achievements are in favour of high skilled workers employed in technical fields. Jobs in labour-intensive industries are most at risk. The consequences of deregulation of the labour market and security in respect to preservation of jobs are among the main challenges we face.

Given the internal and external challenges, the following main lines of action can be outlined for the leadership and the key members of CITUB in the next mandate:

ECONOMY AND LABOR MARKET

1. The main engine of economic growth should be stimulating domestic demand through improved investment activity and increased consumption. Of strategic importance for us is also to identify our national priorities with regard to the development of economic sectors. Being a country with limited resources, the choice of priority sectors for government action will support the setting of objectives and will concentrate the efforts and potentials in the most important economic areas.

- Without calling into question macroeconomic stability and prudent fiscal policy, CITUB will continue to push for income growth, consistent with the cyclical market, economic conditions and growth rates. This will be done both on the occasion of the respective annual state budgets and through negotiating recommended indices of wage growth in the private sector.
- We believe that the budget deficit within the allowable size and the use of debt instruments within reasonable limits (according to the Maastricht criteria) can have a positive impact on Bulgarian economy - not only for covering old debts and fiscal parameters, but for investments in industry and infrastructure with effective return and creating added value.
- The quick recovery of foreign investment flow in Bulgaria is one of the main tasks facing our country. CITUB will seek a wide expert debate to identify priority economic sectors for state influence and foreign investments. According to serious analyses, these sectors are: electronics and electrical engineering; ICT; metallurgy; mechanical engineering; chemical products; transport infrastructure; agriculture and food industry; pharmaceuticals and tourism.
- The European Commission's investment plan for Europe known as the "Juncker Plan" should be used as an important source of fresh financial resource for investment in the economy. We pay special attention to the opportunities of the "Infrastructure and Innovation" window for the restoration and renovation of important economic sectors such as energy, rail, water supply and sewage and others.
- The pursued sustainable fiscal policy has still more reserves for the provision of budgetary revenues. We will continue to keep the low tax burden on labour in the country. This does not mean however that there are no reserves for optimization of the tax system. CITUB will continue to offer measures such as: introduction of a tax-free threshold, progressive tax scale and family taxation.
- We need to find ways to limit state intervention with a view to

avoid possible capacity closures due to non-compliance with European Directives' deadlines to cover certain environmental requirements. We support the establishment of clean energy facilities that use the energy of water, wind, etc., but this process should be developed gradually in order to prevent a price shock and employment crisis, due to the rapid influx of the so-called "green energy".

- With regard to privatization and concessions, CITUB will continue to insist: for high-level expert state assessment on whether privatization /concession of a proposed site does not threaten national security; for compulsory social clauses in privatization and concession contracts which have been consulted with unions.
- CITUB commits to involve actively in the development of a mix of policies at national level, including macroeconomic, fiscal, industrial, labour market and social protection policies, with the aim to create formal jobs and facilitate the transition from informal to formal economy. CITUB undertakes as own important arrangement provided by ILO Recommendation its important role in the process of transition from informal to formal economy.
- CITUB will support and will be actively engaged in the ETUC and ITUC systems for monitoring of digitization, offering case studies and specific policies according to ongoing processes in the country at national and corporate level; and will use good international practices and effective measures to address, adapt and implement them in Bulgaria.
- In this regard, the Confederation will develop a strategic policy framework to ensure that the expansion of digital economy contributes to inclusive growth. The challenges and opportunities of technological change will be assessed and legislative instruments and regulations will be offered, aimed at the widest possible public sharing of the benefits of innovation.

2. In view of improving the quality of the workforce, achieving sustainable employment and reducing youth and long-term unemployment, CITUB sets as its priority: expanding access to the forms of lifelong learning (consultations, vocational guidance, literacy, vocational training, internships, apprenticeships, subsidized employment and promotion of territorial mobility).

- For this purpose policies and programs for sustainable investment in the "knowledge triangle" (innovation, research and education) should be implemented, in order to increase the adaptability and efficiency of the workforce, to provide better jobs - sustainable "white", "green" and other promising jobs and adequate work compensation.

- The modernization of the Employment Agency should focus on helping the most vulnerable groups - low-educated and low-skilled, long-term unemployed, teenagers or people approaching retirement, including measures for “active aging” and solidarity between generations.
- Dynamically changing needs of the labour market should be reported through the e-registration of the demand and supply of work, with opportunities for distance learning and development of promising personal, professional and interdisciplinary skills and competences of the workforce in Bulgaria, to support their realization in subsidized jobs, especially in the primary labour market.
- CITUB believes that we need more flexible mechanisms to ensure performance of decent work for non-traditional groups and spontaneously emerging communities on the labour market. We shall rely on the enhanced control of the General Labour Inspectorate and special measures in respect to non-traditional employment patterns and work modes of the people employed through temporary work agencies, posted workers, informal economy workers and the so-called “digital forms of work”.
- CITUB relies on the improvement and enhancement of social dialogue and partnership at local, national and European level, while developing specific policies for retention, return and reintegration in the labour market of highly qualified specialists in sectors and occupations of great public importance, including immigrants from the Bulgarian diaspora.
- CITUB will continue to insist on the formation of policies and mechanisms for protection of Bulgarian citizens working abroad, applying differentiated approach to different groups - long-term, temporary, seasonal employees, posted workers, cross-border workers and others.

3. CITUB will require guaranteed access for every Bulgarian citizen to quality education, training and lifelong learning, career guidance, recognition of the knowledge acquired at work and informally, skills acquired during each life stage with a view to exercise the right of decent work and life. This requires an informed and consciously increased investment in the elaboration of a combined set of skills and attitudes, allowing for a flexible and low-stress adaptation to technologically renovated jobs.

- We insist on the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for ensuring and improving the quality and effectiveness of training measures, the training of teachers and lecturers, facilitating the transition “education - employment - training – better quality jobs“ in professions and specialties demanded by businesses and laid down

in the priority „white“ and „green“ sectors, the ICT sector and others. CITUB maintains the opinion that students should be acquainted with their labour, social and insurance rights as early as secondary education. CITUB also insists on the development and updating of the state educational standards with health and safety issues, introduction of credits in vocational education and training (VET), etc.

- CITUB will strive for joining the efforts and strengthening the relations and cooperation between educational institutions, business and workers, to direct additional targeted financial and time resources for expanding the participation in lifelong learning, promoting skills and talents, reduction of early school dropouts, “second chance“ for cognitive, portable socio-emotional and professional competences, especially among vulnerable groups in the labour market.
- In the context of digitization and the European guarantee for skills, we insist on the right to training for updating and upgrading of employees’ competencies on a regular basis and extension of this right to all employees, including mobile, posted and cross-border workers.
- CITUB shall promote initiative, creativity, social entrepreneurship, interpersonal communication, development of emotional intelligence by „learning professionals“. We shall encourage flexible pathways for entry into and exit from the educational system and upgrading of knowledge, skills and competences through remote forms, modular and internet based training, including evening, part-time and combined training and international mobility.
- CITUB has built an easily accessible and open for the public platform for distance learning in an interactive and user-friendly way. We will continue the upgrading of qualifications, competences and career development of workers in the trade union system through traditional courses, seminars, workshops and creating conditions for lifelong learning at work, in the home country and at European and international level, for strong social dialogue and collective bargaining.

QUALITY EMPLOYMENT, INCOMES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

4. CITUB will take all necessary steps to limit the possibilities for unprotected/ uninsured and illegal employment. We face a serious challenge with regard to finding new legal regulations for the so-called “disguised employment relationships” and settling of the “atypical forms of employment”, including the work of “dependent” self-employed

workers, workers on fixed-term contracts, seasonal, posted, part-time workers, migrant workers, workers through online platforms, etc.

- We need to solve the issues related to working time, especially the ones related to the unjustified application of summarized calculation of working time. In this connection it is also necessary to analyze very carefully the expected problems with regard to working time in the so-called „workers across digital platforms“ and come out with proposals for adequate solutions to their legal regulation or implementation of the existing regulations with the relevant specificities.
- CITUB will insist for the introduction of new texts in the Labour Code related to the establishment of a new type of right to paid leave for traditionally employed workers in case they are involved in ICT training provided by the employer.
- CITUB will insist on the integration of a “European platform” in the Bulgarian labour reality, for strengthening the collaboration in the fight against undeclared work. Along with that we will initiate awareness and information campaigns on the dangers of engaging in similar forms of work and will seek enhanced cooperation between trade union structures and the controlling bodies of the General Labour Inspectorate (GLI).
- CITUB will continue to closely monitor the manifestations of employment through temporary work agencies, social and legal security for posted Bulgarian workers, as well as the application of the new Law on Labour Migration and Labour Mobility.

5. CITUB will seek new forms for protection of digital work, because digitalisation leads to potential risks in terms of formation of monopolies and increase of precarious employment, mass layoffs of workers, establishment of new tools for supervision and control - even spying on employees, insufficient protection of personal data, etc. At the same time, new opportunities and ways of improving the information, communication, participation and networking are opened.

- CITUB will place the topic of the future of work in the centre of a serious debate, since we believe that society must rely on qualified and secure workforce. We will insist on the establishment of a permanent forum uniting Bulgarian social partners, at which to discuss the vision of digitalization of the Bulgarian labour market, based on a clear roadmap for the future of the economy, the development and sustainability of intelligent digital services and jobs.
- Several key issues stand before CITUB; challenges to which we will seek answers during the new mandate, but the main goal is to assist employees through online platforms for effective protection of their personal data as a fundamental right guaranteed by Article 8 of the

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (HOPES) and Article 16 of the Treaty on the Functioning of European Union (TFEU), as well as their right to privacy – Article 7 of HOPES.

- Another aim of the Confederation is the conclusion of an agreement between the social partners - with reinforced and expanded rights to information, consultation, participation in governance and democratization of the workplace for digital workers. In this regard, CITUB will support the proposal for the establishment of a European legal framework on digital work if the transition to this type of work provides sustainable, fair and honest measures.
- CITUB will offer the national social partners to jointly develop three important documents: A strategy for strengthening the specifics of the digital worker and their labour and social rights; Legal means for establishing a legal formula for concluding and terminating a contract between an online worker and an online employer; Strategy for social protection of workers hired to perform digital work.
- It is crucial for us to review the economic sectors and jobs threatened from extinction by the penetration of digital work in Bulgaria and find adequate ways to protect workers who have lost their jobs as a result of these structural and technological changes, through new types of unemployment benefits, establishment of a universal basic income and similar ones.

6. Accelerating the cohesion in wages and achieving greater equity in the primary distribution of income is a top priority of CITUB. New challenges occur with regard to wage policies, parallel to the rapid change in the nature of work, digitization of economy and the new technologies. Labour cost in most cases is under the strong competitive pressure of the “thinking machines” and new technologies whose products become increasingly cheaper and there are no protective mechanisms and minimum standards.

- According to CITUB a significant cohesion effect in the area of wage policy can be achieved primarily through: increased labour productivity as a result of new quality jobs, improved skills and continuous training of the workforce; improved mechanisms for distribution and redistribution of the created product; real action to tackle wage dumping.
- The minimum wage is a binding minimum standard and CITUB will oppose to all attempts to repeal or turn it into a flexible regulator (depending on regional specifics and the level of employment according to educational-qualification degree). The minimum wage should guarantee the decent life within the family/household.

- In upholding our principle of „decent pay“ we should impose a benchmark building upon the minimum wage, such as the living wage. While living wage has no universal and binding character, it is a reliable mechanism to overcome the drastic pay gaps and an important factor in the transition to a sustainable middle class.
- Our response to the stubbornly imposed trend towards decentralization of wage negotiations shall be an even more active participation at all levels and coordinating the process of wage bargaining. The information system for wage bargaining in the e-trade union of CITUB must be enriched and developed not only with statistics but also with sectoral analyses, forecasts and recommendations for wage growth bargaining by sectors. The module „CLA“ in the e-trade union should be adapted to implement online consultations and training of experts in wage bargaining.
- The involvement of trade unions in the process of modelling the future of work is both a challenge and an opportunity for influence. In view of the expansion of the digital economy CITUB should pay due attention to the creation and update of the regulatory framework, which would ensure protection of the „new employment“, incl. minimum wage/ pay (in line with its new basic characteristics – performance of specific tasks and occasional employment).
- Adequate protection of workers in the digital economy is essential to prevent the emergence of new digital precariat. The future „welfare state“ should have new effective mechanisms for protection and CITUB has to make sure that this protection should be oriented towards the income of the individual and not towards the status of employment.

7. CITUB puts health and safety at work at the core of quality employment. Risk prevention and the promotion of safer and healthier conditions in the workplace are crucial for the improvement of jobs and working conditions, increased competitiveness, positive impact on productivity and social security systems' sustainability.

- A challenge of paramount importance for CITUB is the identification of new and emerging health risks for employees as a result of the dynamically changing forms of work and employment, and developing measures to control these risks.
- The continuous adjustment of legislation, standards and tools for monitoring and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment in the conditions of the fourth industrial revolution is an ambition that CITUB will uphold consistently. In this context, the implementation of trainings for workers to adapt to changes and new requirements is of key importance.

- CITUB will seek to encourage investment in environmentally friendly technologies that help fight climate change and create new opportunities for production and employment, but along with that we will claim for extension of the terms for extraction of fossil energies and compensations for the period of their gradual closure, to the interest of the workers in these sectors and the country's energy.
- CITUB considers the strengthening of the role of the Working Conditions Committees and Working Conditions Groups (aiming at coordinated actions and exchange of "best practices" to improve working conditions and environmental protection) as part of our trade union responsibilities. In this context, serious efforts will be focused on elaborating the legal framework for health monitoring of workers and early detection of diseases associated with risks at work, and on a more effective cooperation with the Executive Agency "General Labour Inspectorate" to increase the effectiveness of the control and protection of labour and social security rights of workers.
- The Confederation urges the State to engage more actively with the creation and financial provision of a specialized institution on safety, health and environment, in order to prioritize prevention and place scientific grounds in the policies for environment friendly, safe and healthy conditions of work.

IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

8. Under the pressure of demographic and technological changes, despite the actions to stabilize insurance finances, long-term sustainability of the social security system and the prospects for increasing adequacy of insurance payments continue to be a major challenge. Deepening poverty and inequalities among workers receiving social security payments shows that the system has a serious problem with the effectiveness and quality of protection.

- CITUB has a consistent, structured and complex vision of the design and development of the social security system. The Confederation recognizes the need for greater solidarity that would contribute to greater justice, quality and stability in the security system and accepts its responsibility for their realization.
- The stabilization of the insurance finances, guaranteeing long-term viability of the social security system and increased adequacy of securities remain a priority of the highest rank. Resistance against restrictive budgetary policies and pressure on costs ensuring the rights of the insured workers shall be among the top priorities of the Confederation.

- It is necessary to improve the quality, scope and adequacy of social security protection against unemployment for workers in atypical forms of employment (seasonal work, part-time work, teleworking and other new and untraditional forms), incl. regulation of benefits for unemployed educated young people until they find their first job.
- Successive measures to increase the income replacement rate for retired people should lead to pension levels between 70 and 80 % of last earnings in the medium and long term.
- The examination and analysis of newly emerging relationships and forms of work, the effects of the so-called “digitalization” and the related to it changes in work organization and society, are a priority on the basis of which CITUB will build the principles and provisions for possible new solutions of the social security system’s organization and functioning.

9. The social solidarity needs to be restarted and its content updated, in order to fulfil the constitutional imperative for the welfare state. **Social protection should become a major instrument for management and balance of the changes in the economy and the labour market.**

- Universal coverage and protection tailored to the individual, regardless of the type of labour ties and relations, are the probable directions for protection in the new conditions and they should be explored in depth. In this context, the idea of an unconditional basic income, the trends, the existing practices and possible solutions to tie the right to protection to the individual, and not to his professional status, deserve serious attention.
- It is of a paramount importance for CITUB to conduct complex, interrelated and resourced policies that guarantee secure work in all its forms and contain specific forms and individual approach to the most vulnerable groups (children, single-parent families, orphans, elderly, sick and single people, people with disabilities). Such policies should be funded by an adequate and non-stagnated share of the GDP.
- The social assistance system should become a guarantor against poverty and social exclusion and the official poverty line should turn into a major landmark for policies.
- The availability of affordable, universal and well-structured system of long-term care of contributory or universal nature (special voucher system), with proven effectiveness for improving personal, family, work and social status of persons in need of constant care, as well as their families, remains one of the priority trade union initiatives of CITUB.
- Pan-European trade union values, policies and requests remain

a major landmark in the development and implementation of national programs and measures to combat poverty and social exclusion; including the Bulgarian projection of the European pillar of social rights.

10. In Bulgaria today there are no people involved in the process of organizing, financing, provision and consumption of health care services that feel satisfied and secure. Market bias soaks still deeper into the health system. Health insurance of citizens as a guarantor of their right to free access and quality service is increasingly losing importance.

- The widespread quasi competition and market practices deepen mistrust in the system and registration of medical institutions under the Commerce Act encourages them to pursue profit at the expense of quality, accessibility and guaranteed treatment. Payment of services, medicines, consumables, etc. under different forms (team selection, donations of supplies, etc.), additionally burdens the insured people who have already paid for all that through their health insurance contributions.
- For CITUB the main criterion for successful functioning of public healthcare is the guaranteed, effective and non-discriminatory access to quality and adequate healthcare, regardless of the financial, social and ethnic status or place of residence. Legislation changes are needed, so that the functioning of the system and the guarantees of citizens' rights would comply with international norms and commitments.
- CITUB will uphold the following measures in order to improve the quality of services and care provided by the health system: gradual increase of the GDP share for health financing, allocation of special resources for measures and procedures for health prophylaxis and prevention, further improvement of the legal regulation on patients' rights.
- The development and implementation of adequate forms and systems to evaluate and remunerate the work of health professionals, as well as maintenance and increase of their expertise and qualification is part of the effective health care. Careful application of innovation, which would increase the effectiveness of healthcare and facilitate the work of the employed in health system is also necessary.

CHANGES IN WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES OF CITUB

11. The changes in the nature of work require new organizational solutions in the context of preserving and expanding trade union density, including a) maintaining integration and membership of traditional workers/employees and expanding their scope; b) attracting new members from non-traditional sectors and forms of economic activity, professional and social groups with atypical employment, workers in online platforms, etc.

- CITUB should continue to formulate ideas for provision of different types of social protection and services in order to attract individual workers employed under atypical contracts, self-employed and other non-standard workers. CITUB should continue to use new mechanisms of representation and protection of the interests of different age groups in the context of changing values.

- CITUB should further develop the mechanisms of individual membership, including - territorial unions/associations of individual members and/or employees in small/micro enterprises in similar industries; professional associations within a sector/branch or similar sectors/branches; specific associations of specialists, engineers and technical workers and other highly qualified workers.

- In the conditions of the “digital revolution” CITUB and its main members should develop specific forms and channels of communication, mechanisms to attract new members and forms of representation based on the specific characteristics, interests and needs of the separate groups of employees.

- The e-platform (e-trade union) of CITUB should be used proactively in order to maintain and develop new communications, active participation of all categories of workers, attracting members through quasi-organizations and/or preliminary/preparatory forms of organization (e.g. online networks of individual members; networks/associations of members who have common or similar professional profiles, types of employment, etc.).

- The challenges posed by new technologies and economic uncertainty require unions to develop forms of group representation (for groups of enterprises in one sector, similar or different sectors, a large company/holding, clusters, etc.).

- We shall put particular emphasis on: the mechanisms for linking and coordination of key members of the Confederation and trade union

organizations in multinationals and other large companies with the workers in their supply chains and their organization into trade unions; on territorial forms (municipalities and regions) of representation and coordination, in order to protect non-standard employees and individual members.

12. In order to meet the emerging internal and external challenges and provide systematic labour protection, it is necessary to have such a **trade union system that uses the human and financial resources in the most effective way**. Within the next mandate CITUB, together with its main members, should achieve a common vision for consolidation and implement concrete steps for change management.

- The general objective in the next mandate is to stimulate the processes of functional consolidation of structures, to compensate the expert deficits in the system, to enhance the collective bargaining power, to strengthen the respect in conducting joint protest actions, to implement new approaches for attracting new members, to increase the effectiveness in protecting current members, to improve representativeness and strengthen coordination in carrying out of international policies.
- CITUB will seek to broaden the social basis by including a much wider range of workers and employees who are not union members. Moreover, in the next mandate we should make consistent efforts to build a „discussion network“ with NGOs, which would have a systemic nature and will be used when non-union support is necessary for large, nationally significant issues and initiatives.
- Unconditional and prompt measures are needed to assist and support the union stewards at basic level, implementing both organizational and financial measures. Together with that, the support must be more tangible at regional level, too, with the inclusion of the so-called regional sectoral experts whose direct task is to work with the basic trade unions. Their powers will be determined (and their remuneration will be shared) by key members who have reached general agreements under the new three sectoral councils - the public sector, industry and services.
- CITUB should renew the forms of communication with Bulgarian workers, find new motivational arguments to attract them. Basically two groups must be put under systematic union intervention - young generations, for whom unions are an unfamiliar structure and employees in small and micro enterprises. Along with awareness-raising campaigns, CITUB should expand and improve its policies on the use of ICT in trade union activities. CITUB needs to expand its

presence in social media in a more notable way in the coming years.

- In the global world, international trade union cooperation is becoming more and more important. Labour mobility suggests the emergence of increasingly complicated and expensive forms of union protection. The measures that are becoming increasingly necessary are: strengthening of transnational trade union cooperation, mutual recognition of trade union membership of migrant workers in the EU countries and establishment of information & advisory centres. Only through joint efforts and resources we can limit the exploitation of workers in the EU on the one hand, and eliminate social dumping of the common European labour market on the other.

13. CITUB will apply an integrative approach to gender equality.

A strong political engagement is needed in order to overcome gender segregation and achieve equality between women and men. At their congress in Paris in 2015 the affiliates of ETUC, including CITUB, committed to continue to put gender equality high on its agenda.

- We shall actively participate in setting national policies for equality in the National Action Plan for promotion of equality between women and men, resulting from the implementation of the new Law on Equality between Women and Men.
- Our goals are: building a bridge between the workforce, employers and institutions to expand opportunities for active involvement of women in the labour market; more flexible and full disclosure of their potential in the workforce; ensuring equal access of women to all professions and levels of government.
- In order to improve organizational and managerial involvement of women in trade union activities, as well as their equal participation in the activities and policies of the Confederation and its members, CITUB will apply an approach aimed at eliminating the difference in gender representation in the decision-making bodies.
- Together with the employers' organizations and in cooperation with other institutions, CITUB will develop tools and criteria for neutral and objective assessment of the positions/functions, as a means of achieving equal pay.
- We shall continue to work for the improvement of the balance "work - family - private life" through the adoption of measures to promote equality with regard to flexible working hours, parental leave taken by men, reintegration after maternity leave, parental leave or long sick leave, availability of kindergartens with working time consistent with the parents' shifts, etc.

- Another important factor for achieving gender equality is the development and implementation of policies to prevent and eliminate violence against women. An important element should be to promote sharing of the problem and create a culture of sending signals and formal reporting of cases of violence in all its manifestations, as well as assisting victims.
- Together with employers we shall organize annual campaigns for zero tolerance towards violence and harassment at the work place. In order to implement the European framework agreements at national level, CITUB will urge the social partners to sign national agreements for the prevention of stress and for harassment and violence at the work place.
- For the effective implementation of measures in the sphere of gender equality, CITUB will develop a system of awareness, research, monitoring and control on the issues, as well as initiate and promote carrying out of meetings, seminars, conferences and other activities to raise awareness and to exchange experience and best practices.

14. The creation of favourable conditions for professional, social and personal realization of young people for their participation in the governance at local and national level, for return of the students abroad to Bulgaria, contributes to the improvement of the demographic situation, which is a significant factor for catching up the European Union development and convergence of the quality of life. This is a prerequisite for the formation of strategic goals and priorities of CITUB with respect to young people:

- Facilitating access to quality services to support the full personal and social development of young people between 14 and 29 years in compliance with their needs and interests.
- Encouraging volunteerism among young people aged up to 29, as a driving force for personal development, mobility, learning, competitiveness, social cohesion, solidarity between generations and establishment of citizenship.
- Ensuring effective representation of young people's interests in the creation, implementation and evaluation of policies at the municipal, regional and national levels through youth councils.
- Creating an attractive environment for young people aged up to 35 years in small towns and rural areas, ensuring effective access to education, training, information and consultation services.
- Promoting inter-ethnic and intercultural understanding, tolerance

and dialogue, stimulating and supporting the participation of Bulgarian youth in international youth and trade union movement in Europe and worldwide.

EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS OF REPRESENTATION

15. For CITUB improving and safeguarding the fundamental constitutional and statutory rights of citizens is of utmost importance. So we will make every effort to ensure compliance with the labour and social rights of citizens governed by different laws, and put a special emphasis on strengthening the right to association (including in trade unions) and the right to remuneration in accordance with the work done.

- According to its priorities CITUB will promote, justify and build on the set of concrete proposals for amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria on civil, personal and collective rights (incl. the right to collective bargaining, information and consultation).
- The acts against the implementation of the right of association, incl. in trade unions, are a crime in their nature. We insist that these acts should not only be criminalized but also in the Constitution of Bulgaria there should be texts aimed at ensuring the right of association, including in trade union organizations, as well as observing the rights deriving from the right of association in non-profit organizations.
- Observations on the practice and specific violations of the rights of employees, (including the right of association) in professional organizations should be established as an annual campaign.
- Particularly relevant in this respect is the issue of knowledge and use of protection mechanisms: trade union actions; public pressure and giving publicity to the problems; specialized state bodies and institutions, incl. court proceedings; international organizations and establishment of internationally-public openness on relevant issues.
- We will continue our efforts to improve legislation in relation to exercising the constitutional right to strike. We will insist that the right to collective bargaining be proclaimed and guaranteed constitutionally, incl. for civil servants.
- In connection with the settlement of individual and collective disputes we should orientate our efforts towards voluntary means of resolving both kinds of disputes, incl. creating opportunities for special

jurisdictions to work in this direction, through supplements to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria.

16. Improving the role of collective bargaining in the conditions of increasing uncertainty, asserting the universal right to negotiate and the autonomy of collective bargaining, is raised as a fundamental priority of CITUB. In addition, we have the digital economy challenges standing before us, with a number of key issues to which we must give an answer and find a practical solution.

- CITUB will insist that collective bargaining and collective agreements become part of the tools for development of strategies and programs for risk and crisis management, competitiveness, sustainable employment, fairer redistribution of the public product and reduction of inequalities.
- CITUB will undertake targeted action to change the legal framework governing collective bargaining, highlighting the characteristics of negotiation in the real and budget sectors, as well as the extended by the new technologies perimeter of new, non-standard forms of employment, with an adequate response to the transnationalization of labour relations.
- It is essential for us to strengthen branch level negotiations, oppose forcible decentralization, to continue our efforts to spread sectoral/branch CLAs, in order to achieve a decisive breakthrough in the fight against shadow economy and social dumping.
- It is very important for us to achieve consolidation of information and expert resources, to synchronize trade union actions through the establishment of an expert CLA network, application of a common coordination mechanism at all levels and functional consolidation in some sectors, coordination of negotiations in MNC in accordance with the European and international agreements and the EWC activities.
- We will strive for high quality CLAs at all levels, and that means: creative collective agreements resulting from multivariate negotiations, containing algorithms for innovative solutions to current and future problems, with protective mechanisms preventing „open clauses“ and at the same time ensuring better flexibility of the solutions, aiming at clear investment benefits and preservation of competitiveness, as well as jobs and income security.
- We need to give practical answers to the questions about the future of collective agreements in the context of changes in the nature of labour, new technologies and digitalization the economy. Our efforts

in this area should be focused on the analysis of potential new levels of representation of interests, construction and approbation of new CLA models, etc. In this regard we are ready to mobilize the necessary resources - organizational and financial, hardware and software, incl. establishing support groups and a network of like-minded IT-specialists.

17. The development of effective mechanisms of representation, information, consultation and participation in governance is of key importance for CITUB in the context of digitization of production, use of new economic and organizational forms of enterprises, atypical forms of employment, as well as from the point of view of the ongoing processes of globalization, free movement of capital and the dynamics of ownership of enterprises.

- The Confederation and its main members should take action to expand the subject and scope of the provided information and consultations, improve the mechanisms of communication and representation at national and transnational level for multinationals and their subsidiaries, which would improve both the protection of the rights and interests of workers and would allow to improve the efficiency and quality of work in enterprises.
- CITUB should discuss and formulate proposals for changes in the legislation, incl. for expanding the scope of the information and consultation systems in enterprises with less than 50 employees, in holdings and public administration; improving the conditions for the use of information and consultation aiming at greater independence from the employer.
- In the context of social partnership and relations with the institutions, CITUB will take initiatives for: the creation of attitudes and engagement of social partners in the processes of information and consultation; expansion of existing and use of new initiatives and schemes for direct participation of employees and participation in the processes of information, consultations and solving specific problems of jobs in enterprises.
- We will formulate proposals to the executive power to improve the system for collecting, processing and providing access to statistical information, covering information for businesses, movement of capitals, changes in management and the rights of employees.
- The Confederation and its main members should continue the informational and educational work among the trade union structures on information, consultation and participation in management by strengthening the focus on the new opportunities for communication,

representation and feedback; on improving the efficiency of the forms for increase of the capacity of elected representatives (including those in the European Works Councils).

SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN PROTECTION OF WORKERS

18. For CITUB the application of European standards and the development of European social dialogue is related to: increasing the participation of CITUB in the ongoing reforms, in the elaboration and implementation of policies approved at European and national level; support for the policies and decisions of the ETUC connected with the new economic governance and the European Semester monitoring; introduction of European social dialogue instruments, particularly the autonomous agreements of the European social partners.

- CITUB should develop and propose to the social partners and the government guidelines for improving the effectiveness of the European social dialogue as a basis for improvement of the national negotiations at tripartite and bipartite level.
- CITUB and its main members should commit to elaborate substantiated analyses, opinions and positions on the reforms and policies of the government, in view of protection and preservation of labour and social standards within the ETUC coordinated policies on the European Semester.
- Representatives of the various structures of CITUB and its main members should continue their active participation in training seminars, exchange of best practices, etc., for capacity building in order to participate effectively in national and European social dialogue and the European Semester, including through the use of EU structural and investment funds.
- CITUB and its main members should continue to develop and implement joint work programs and integrated projects prepared independently and/or together with European social partners and the social partners of the EU member states.

19. Tripartite dialogue and partnership should become an important mechanism for participation of workers and employers in the formation of government policies, sectoral administrations and local authorities. A priority for us is to create and gradually establish

the practice of planning and deployment of the activities of the tripartite bodies, so that we could go beyond just expressing opinions on draft laws of the Cabinet and MPs.

- Within its mandate CITUB should continue to work for the elaboration of texts in the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, which would turn into a constitutional principle the social dialogue and tripartite cooperation between the social partners (the state, represented by the executive and legislative power, representative organizations of workers and employees and employers) on labour and social security relations and living standards.
- CITUB should pay significant attention to the application of the legal rules, providing an opportunity for concluding preliminary agreements between representative organizations of workers and employers to adopt regulations - on their own initiative or at the request of the state, which would compel the state to adopt and implement them.
- CITUB and its main members should continue their work to improve the level of expertise and activity of the representatives of the Confederation in specialized tripartite bodies.

20. We have to improve the bilateral dialogue and affirm horizons for development through new strategies that are based on the paradigm of “mutual benefit” and the theory of “conflicts without losers”. CITUB and its main members should work more actively to improve their participation in sectoral committees at European level and European industrial federations and to link this participation with the sectoral and branch social dialogue at national level.

- CITUB will continue its efforts in the following directions: formation of active political and expert position before the Bulgarian government in view of institutional support for the autonomous bipartite sectoral social dialogue; adequate change of the legal framework, clearly defining bipartite social dialogue and regulating the process of cooperation at this level and its closer involvement with taking and implementing management decisions; defining, legitimization and promotion of the dialogue structures at this level and its effects on the sectoral communities.
- CITUB and its main members should also continue their work on: expanding opportunities for achieving bilateral sectoral agreements; joint development of sectoral analyzes, forecasts and strategies; development of national (or by economic activities) recommended index for wage growth in the real sector.

- The scope of bipartite social dialogue by sectors, branches and economic activities needs to include new and untraditional aspects, such as: the effects of globalization, the impact of MNC, the specific problems of SMEs, informal economy, changes in capital and the rights of employees, the impact of the changing global and European standards for environmental impact, energy efficiency, waste management and others.

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