

item 3: **Trade union issues in the region - Country Reports: Trade union rights, social dialogue, collective bargaining, privatization and liberalization; actions taken by affiliates**

Russian Federation

Health Workers Union of the Russian Federation

At the federal level, the Trade Union has 80 regional organisations (22 republican, 8 regional, 47 territory and 2 territorial ones, and the Trade Union of Moscow's Healthcare Employees RPO); 321 local branches at the municipal level (city, urban district and municipal), and 9,358 local branches within individual organisations. As of the beginning of the current year, the overall number of Trade Union members was 2,219,528.

In 2016, the Trade Union channelled its principal efforts into preserving and improving the level of labour, socioeconomic and professional rights and guarantees for healthcare workers, providing legal protection, defending the social and labour interests of union members.

- **Financial provision for healthcare:** the Trade Union has succeeded in getting rid of the practice of channelling funds from the Compulsory Medical Insurance into the federal budget for subsequent use for purposes unrelated to insurance (RUB 92 bn). Each year, the Trade Union actively participates in the consideration and discussion of the federal budget and of the budget for the Federal Compulsory Medical Insurance Fund. In the process of compiling the 2017 budget, the Trade Union succeeded in getting rid of the practice of channelling the funds of the Compulsory Medical Insurance into the federal budget with subsequent use for purposes unrelated to insurance (RUB 92 bn).

- **Improving wage level guarantees for healthcare employees:** the Trade Union has succeeded in having fixed salaries increased as part of the healthcare employees' remuneration. In order to improve minimum wage guarantees, the Trade Union lobbied to increase the minimum wage, which was raised on 01 July 2016 from RUB 6,204 to RUB 7,500 a month. The draft federal budget for 2017 provides for minimum wage increase to RUB 7,800.

- **Healthcare employees' work measurement.** In 2016, as part of the Ministry of Healthcare's Inter-Agency Working Group on work measurement and professional standards development, the Trade Union's professionals continued their work on work measurement for healthcare professionals. With the Trade Union's participation, standard guidelines for doctors in 10 specialisations were approved. Jointly with the Ministry of Healthcare, the Trade Union's professionals worked on the plan for developing work measurements up to 2020.

Russia's 2017 Labour Code's Unified Recommendations approve the proposals made by the Trade Union's Central Committee and Russia's Ministry of Healthcare on introducing an expenses cap (no more than 40%) for wages payable to the administration, management and auxiliary personnel from healthcare institutions' payroll budget.

Amendments introduced into Russia's Labour Code in 2016 stipulate that the founders of an organisation are to introduce a mandatory cap on the ratio between the average monthly wages of top managers, their deputies, FEOs, and the average monthly wages of regular employees of state and municipal healthcare organisations. Russia's 2017 Labour Code's Unified Recommendations incorporate the suggestions made by the Trade Union's Central Committee

and Russia's Ministry of Healthcare that said ratio be set within the range of 1-6 in healthcare institutions of Russia.

- **Human resourcing.** The Trade Union is working on revising work performance standards for medical professionals within the structure of professional qualification groups, taking into account unified approaches to organising medical care. The Trade Union's representatives will participate in the work of the accrediting commissions.

In January 2016, the Trade Union of Healthcare Employees of the Russian Federation sent an open letter to the President and Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, and the Speakers of the Houses of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in connection with the Union's grave concerns about the situation in healthcare today and in the near future. The letter described the sector's principal problems, the negative results of the reforms introduced hastily and without in-depth analysis of their possible consequences for both the population and medical professionals; particular attention was focused on the fact that the 2016 federal budget and the budget of the Federal Compulsory Medical Insurance Fund lacked funds for adjusting the wages of public healthcare employees (implementing these budgets in their current form might make the staffing situation in the healthcare sector critical). The letter also emphasised the trend to cut wages in some regions, to reduce or abolish compensation and guarantees for work performed in hazardous and dangerous conditions, etc.

The Trade Union expressed its certainty that citizens' constitutional right to free healthcare within the public healthcare system may be exercised only on condition of sufficient financial provision for the work of medical institutions and the quality of the medical aid provided depends not only on the professionals' qualifications, but also on how their work is assessed by the state and by the public.

The Trade Union emphasised the need to develop federal mechanisms for centralised management and coordination in this strategically significant sector.

- the Trade Union succeeded in ensuring that **sectoral approaches to specialised assessment of the working environment intended to make assessment objective** are introduced into the legislation:

- In considering individual legislative rules for specialised assessment of the working environment, the Trade Union succeeded in having the legislation changed in relation to establishing the employee's right to suggest that potentially hazardous and/or dangerous factors at their workplace be identified.
- Jointly with the Ministry of Healthcare, the Trade Union initiated amending the List of procedural specifics for conducting working environment assessment in the workplaces of medical employees providing psychiatric and medical care to patients with mental diseases and disorders (Decree no. 1351 of the Government of the Russian Federation of 14 December 2016).

- **Abolition of preliminary and periodical health examinations for medical employees working in a hazardous working environment was prevented:** Revocation of Order no. 203n of the Ministry of the Healthcare and Social Protection of the Russian Federation of 12 April 2011 would have resulted in an increase in the maximum permissible epidemic threshold for infectious diseases and, consequently, a greater workload for organisations within the healthcare system that are already suffering from personnel shortages; it would also have resulted in ineffective early diagnosis of occupational illnesses.

- **The right to additional annual paid vacation for individual categories of medical employee was retained:** As part of the work of Russia's Three-Party Commission on Regulating Social and Labour Relations (RTPC), the Trade Union and the Ministry of Labour of the Russian Federation prevented the legislative orders of the USSR and the RSFSR granting individual categories of medical employees the right to additional annual paid vacation from being revoked. Three days' additional vacation is granted on the basis of length of service.

- **The right of rural medical employees to social support measures to offset their housing maintenance and utility payments was upheld:** the Trade Union achieved abolition of controversial points contained in the draft Federal Law “On amending certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation relating to measuring and improving social support measures, proceeding from the obligation to comply with the principles of target-orientation and the needs criteria.” If those proposals had been adopted, rural medical employees would, in their overwhelming majority, have lost their right to social support for housing maintenance and utilities payments.

- **The issue of housing maintenance and utility payments for rural medical employees in the Chechen Republic has been resolved:** the Trade Union’s active stance in defending the rights of medical and pharmaceutical employees to housing maintenance and utility payments culminated in adoption in 2016 of a Decree of the Government of the Chechen Republic on approving the Procedure for granting social support to medical and pharmaceutical employees in the Chechen Republic who live in rural areas or in urban-type settlements.

- **Over 2,500 audits were conducted on compliance with the employees’ rights to compensatory measures pursuant to the specialised assessment of their working environment (SAWE):** During 2016, the Trade Union’s technical and legal labour inspectors conducted over 2,500 audits on the subject of “The Role of elected bodies of all levels in carrying out specialised assessment of the working environment and in complying with the employee’s right to compensatory measures pursuant to SAWE results.” Pursuant to these audits, over 9,000 violations were rectified (workday duration, cancellation (or shortening) of additional paid vacation and compensatory payments).

ALSWU

At present ALSWU embraces 77 territorial organizations, 74% of ALSWU’s members being workers in the housing and communal services; 6.5 % – workers in urban surface electric transport; 6.5% - in municipal energy supply; 5.5% - in gas facilities; 7.5% - in local industry and consumer services, hotels, companies employing people with disabilities; as well as students of sector-profile universities and colleges. ALSWU union density stands at 61.9%. Women are 52.9% of ALSWU membership. Young members under 35 are 18.5%. Union density among young workers is at 66.9%. Total membership reduction was at about 12 thousand people due to workforce cuts in the framework of the ongoing industries’ restructuring, bankruptcies and companies’ liquidation, also due to our territorial organizations’ insufficiently active work in order to recruit workers into the trade union and create new shop-level organizations in the newly emerging enterprises of different ownership forms. Authorities set a strategic goal to transfer 80% of the unitary housing and communal services enterprises into private management by 2020. The result may be such that membership loss trend will continue, if there’s no radical change in the union’s attitude to the problem of attracting and recruiting new members.

Since our last Constituency meeting ALSWU’s efforts have been aimed at institutional strengthening and preservation of trade union organizations, effective personnel policies implementation, increasing union membership motivation.

In combination with the low pay levels (the sector’s average monthly wage is about 60% of that in the Russian Federation) low prestige of working in housing, lack of meaningful social guarantees (no service housing rentals/allowances or dormitories) are the main reasons for staff turnover (over 30%) in many regions of Russia. The industry is facing a considerable shortage of skilled blue-collar workers in the leading occupations, engineers and technical workers, youth.

In order to address these and other issues ALSWU stepped up its participation in the sectoral reforms, aiming to improve their legal framework, sought state support and full realization of the federal target programs. ALSWU carried out constructive dialogue with the Ministry of Construction of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation,

sectoral employers' associations. Through the development of social partnership ALSWU supports and improves its image and, thus, provides higher union membership motivation.

Significant role in improving ALSWU's status in the social partnership system goes to the Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of Construction of the Russian Federation, Russian Association of Employers "Union of Utilities Companies" and ALSWU. The new sectoral tariff agreement in housing and communal services for 2017-2019 was signed and registered with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation in December 2016. It is also important to note ALSWU's agreements with industry employers' associations. These agreements are: The Federal Tariff Agreement in the Elevator and Vertical Transport Industry (2016-2018); ALSWU's Co-operation Agreements with Open Joint Stock Company "Scientific and Technical Center for Safety in Industry" and the Non-Profit Partnership "The National Legal and Innovation Association Of Occupational Health and Safety"; Sectoral Agreement in Public Consumer Services and Artisans' Organizations (2014-2016); Sectoral Tariff Agreement For the Urban Surface Electric Transport Organizations of the Russian Federation (2015-2017).

The implementation of nationwide sectoral agreements is backed by 134 agreements at territorial level, 3,960 local level collective agreements, on the basis of which ALSWU is working to protect the union members' rights and interests, decent occupational safety and health conditions, to ensure the union's organizational, personnel and financial development, the youth, international and information policy implementation.

In its message to the Russian President Vladimir Putin, to the Civic Chamber of Russia, the Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation M.Sokolov ALSWU demanded from the government that it adopted support measures for the urban surface electric transport preservation and modernization, its proper financing and improvement. The union organized collection of signatures campaign in support of urban electric transport, and on April 6, 2016 public hearings were held at the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation on the issues faced by urban electric transport in Russia and ways to solve them. ALSWU President A.Vasilevskii spoke at the hearings. Unfortunately, the government did not pay due attention to the recommendations of the Civic Chamber. The struggle for the preservation of urban electric transport, the protection of its workers' rights to decent working conditions and wages and the population's rights to convenient, affordable and environmentally-friendly transport continues.

ALSWU Central and regional committees sent out quarterly letters on indexing the minimum monthly tariff rates, thus ensuring the territorial and shop-floor trade union organizations the legal basis for their salary increase requirements and demands.

In 2016 to ensure protection of workers' health in hazardous occupations ALSWU twice addressed the Chairman of the Russian Government Dmitry Medvedev, and in early 2017 personally - the Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation M.Topilin on the need to recognize the justified demand for special assessment of working conditions in water supply and sewerage networks, service and repair of sewer equipment, restoring for the workers their former compensation for biological factors. RF Ministry of Labour is delaying the solution of this problem, while the work in water supply and sewerage is associated with high risk of exposure to pathogens that might cause dangerous infectious diseases.

Carrying out the decisions of its VI (Extraordinary) Congress and Plenary Meetings ALSWU Central Committee has repeatedly appealed to the FNPR General Council with proposals to initiate amendments to the Labor Code of the Russian Federation in order to ensure the basic motivation of trade-union membership, expansion of the rights of Russian trade unions to protect the workers and trade union activists in line with the international practice, but these steps so far have not brought results.

The decline in the total number of ALSWU membership was not fixed by social partnership development or active work of 16 regional organizations that managed to increase their membership or at least maintain the numbers at the level of 2015.

Lack of universal trade-union membership motivation, the ongoing sectoral reorganization, significant staff turnover, lack of employers' interest in constructive dialogue with the workers, increased number of cases of freedom of association rights violation, require that ALSWU intensifies its efforts to increase trade union membership, identifying and using all available reserves for this purpose.

Thus, ALSWU has focused on creating new and maintaining existing older shop-floor and local union organizations, in structural terms, giving larger organizations the status of the territorial committees and introducing the practice of using trusted trade union officials in smaller workplaces structures.

The union opposed the employers' attempts to freeze workers' wages and reduce their social security. ALSWU constantly monitors regulation of wages on the basis of rising prices and inflation, as well as the implementation of targets set by tariff and local collective agreements, and also compliance with employment security and labour protection guarantees.

ALSWU members receive legal assistance from their union, free advice on social, labour and economic relations and help in filing the documents for the courts, in representing the interests of trade union members in various courts and court proceedings.

ALSWU is taking steps to stimulate and protect trade union staff, trains and educates union activists in the system of trade union education, preparing reserve of staff and activists experienced in recruiting new members. More than 24 thousand activists are embraced by all forms of union training.

ALSWU members and activists are provided with relevant information through electronic and printed information tools. The union continues to co-operate for union propaganda and recruitment purposes with industry and trade union media.

To increase union membership motivation among young workers ALSWU stimulates creation of youth councils in its affiliates. Young activists are included in the union staff reserve, youth councils receive financial support, young activists are increasingly encouraged to participate in collective bargaining, drafting and preparation of collective agreements. All of this contributes to the formation of young workers union beliefs and understanding of the goals and objectives of the trade union as defender of the workers' interests.

ALSWU's cultural, sports and recreational activities, provision of union members children's summer rest and recreation, health resort treatment, tourism, collective excursion trips and other forms of collective activities are also aimed at increasing trade-union membership motivation. ALSWU uses non-material incentives, like trade-union awards in amateur performances competitions, folk art, photo contests, as well as material incentives in the form of Trade Union Awards in various levels' professional skills competitions.

Of particular note is the positive experience at Moscow Municipal Workers Union (the program "Trade Union Support") in motivating trade union membership through provision of additional services only upon presentation of a union card to union members and to companies where there are trade union organizations, as well as St. Petersburg-Leningrad organization's system focused on the increase of shop-floor and local union organizations' responsibility, guaranteeing protection of social and labor rights and interests of trade union members on the basis of collective agreements, maintaining and increasing union membership; and also the Krasnoyarsk Krai organization's incentive system for trade union activists proportionately to the number of members in the local union organizations.

Within the framework of international cooperation ALSWU is studying international experience in the area of housing and communal services, paying special attention to the problems associated with public-private partnerships and multinational free trade agreements that bear potentially negative consequences for the public services and the situation of workers and the public. So, on 8-9 February 2016, an international trade union conference on the subjects was held. It was attended by ALSWU national and regional leaders, President and experts of the Norwegian union "Fagforbundet," Deputy General Secretary of Public Services International (PSI) Daniel Bertossa. Among the guests were representatives of relevant ministries and agencies, employers' organizations, the Chamber of Commerce of the Russian Federation, FNPR, GCTU.

The main conference topics were:

- Trade unions and multinational free trade agreements - developments in the 2015/2016 and future prospects.
 - How PPP affect the finances? What the trade unions and the governments at all levels should be aware of.
 - Privatization of public services - winners and losers.
- Is it possible to turn back the privatization, and at what cost?

The meeting of ALSWU Youth Council on 6-8 April 2016 was held in Kazan with the participation of the Norwegian sister union "Fagforbundet" Youth Committee representatives. There was a youth seminar, at which the following topics were presented and discussed:

- Internet and social networks in the work with young employees (continued from 2015)
- Creation of trade union youth pages in social media
- Privatization of public services through the eyes of young people

In June 2016 ALSWU youth delegation participated in the annual summer youth conference of "Fagforbundet".

In October 2016, both – ALSWU and "Fagforbundet" youth councils held a webinar on the problems arising in connection with international free trade agreements (TISA, TTIP and other), inviting experts on the subject.

In 2016 ALSWU Youth Council created youth pages on "Facebook" and "Instagram".

On 7 October 2016 within the framework of the international action "For decent work!" over 25 thousand ALSWU members participated, including more than 300 (54 youth representatives among them) who took part in the meetings of the tripartite commissions on social and labour relations regulation. In general, taking into account the specific conditions in the regions on that day trade union conferences, praesidia meetings, outdoor meetings, "round tables", pickets, meetings with the media, meetings of trade union activists with the heads and representatives of the executive and legislative authorities, negotiations with employers on the indexation of workers' wages, meetings of labor collectives were carried out

The 2016 May Day action named "NO - to taxes and prices increase! YES - to growth of salaries and pensions!" was attended by over 85 thousand ALSWU members, of whom more than 24 thousand were young people below the age of 35.

Protecting labour rights and socio-economic interests of the sector's workers ALSWU acts on the principles of its programme "Decent Work As the Basis of Human Well-Being and Development of the Country" and considers as the main directions of its work the achievement of decent wages, sustainable employment, improving of working conditions and safety, safeguarding workers' health, providing genuine social partnership as important social and labour relations regulation mechanism, protecting the employees' rights and interests on the basis of existing labour laws and international labour standards.

All-Russia Electric Power Trade union (AREPTU)

Principal indicators of Russia’s United Energy System in 2016.

Effective balance of electric power in the Russian Federation
(bn kW/h)

Balance sheet item	11 months		Growth compared to 2015 %
	2015	2016	
Power consumption	937.2	949.5	1.3%
Power generation (total)	949.6	965.5	1.7%
including: CHPP	616.6	616.2	- 0.1%
HPP	156.1	172.2	10.3%
NPP	176.9	177.1	0.1%

In 2016, power generation in the Russian Federation increased over 2015 mostly owing to an increase in power generation by hydropower plants.

The increase in power consumption compared to the previous period is due to the inclusion of the power grid of the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, and also of the Western and Central Power Districts of the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, where big power-intensive facilities of Russia’s oil and gas industry were launched in 2016.

The activities of the All-Russia Electric Power Trade union (AREPTU) public organisation in protecting the socioeconomic and labour rights of the sector’s workers.

The Sectoral Rates Agreement in the Power Sector of the Russian Federation for the years 2013-2015 (prolonged for 2016-2018) (hereinafter referred to as the SRA) concluded between AREPTU and the Industrial Association of Employers of the Power Sector (IAEPS) remains the principal instrument for protecting the socioeconomic and labour rights of power sector workers. In Russia’s power sector, the SRA holds a special place in the sectoral system of social partnership, since it serves as the key sectoral standard for the power sector’s organizations. It determines the mutual obligations of employers and employees, of their representatives in the area of social and labour relations. The overwhelming majority of power companies take the provisions of the SRA into account when drafting collective bargaining agreements and local regulations that govern social and labour relations within those organizations.

The Sectoral Rates Agreement in the power sector covers virtually all the types of activity in the power sector. The SRA participants are mostly grid operators and generating organizations (79%); the SRA also includes sales organizations and organizations working in other areas: 11 and 10 per cent, respectively.

The short-term tasks the Trade union faces include resolving the issue of involving in the SRA nearly 20% of the sector’s key employers that currently are not part of the sector’s system of social partnership.

The meeting of 23 December 2016 chaired by A.V. Novak, Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation, was the top event of the reporting year. This meeting served to confirm the Ministry of Energy’s interest in continuing communications on topical social and labour issues with representatives of the sector-level social partnership parties.

The AREPTU's Chair V.N. Vakhrushkin and Deputy Chair Yu.B. Ofitserov represented the trade union at the meeting at the Ministry of Energy.

At the meeting, the main focus was to consider the results of implementing the Sectoral Rates Agreement in the Power Sector of the Russian Federation for the years 2013-2015 (SRA), prolonged until 2018.

Minister of Energy A.V. Novak drew the participants' particular attention to the difficult economic circumstances the power sector's infrastructure is working under in the current year, given the overall situation in the Russian economy and the principal goals of the Government of the Russian Federation; at the same time, the Minister noted that the social and labour area remained a priority for the federal Ministry, even though the Ministry's internal regulations do not require this. The head of the sectoral ministry noted the important role social partnership plays in maintaining a stable situation in power sector organisations; this partnership is founded on the systemic instrument titled the Sectoral Rates Agreement in the Power Sector of the Russian Federation concluded in 2013. Today, 83 of the sector's biggest organisations are parties to the Agreement.

The Minister also emphasised that Russia's draft Energy Strategy up to 2035 has a special section on the areas and tasks in managing and developing human assets. The section notes the importance of developing and introducing professional standards, updating the job classification system, creating a system of employment forecasting; it also stipulates government support for enterprises and organisations investing in developing human assets.

In turn, V.N. Vakhrushkin, Chair of the All-Russian Electric Power Trade union, noted that, recently, the Ministry's role in regulating social and labour relations had grown significantly and that it often served as the key element in resolving social conflicts in power companies; he asked the participants to note particularly the specifics of developing a system of social and labour relations in organisations that are party to the Sectoral Rates Agreement in the Power Sector of the Russian Federation; the problems that impede somewhat performance of social partnership obligations under the SRA. He also assessed the employers' compliance with the SRA's key norms. In particular, he emphasised that, given the recession, the growth rate of real wages had slowed down significantly; organisations not complying with the SRA had increased to 65% in the current year; employers still manipulated the permanent and variable elements of wages; power companies still failed to include economically sound payroll costs in their full rates, this remaining a most pressing problem. N.V. Vakhrushkin also stressed the lack of unified approaches to work measurement; he suggested that prospective development programmes involving decommissioning of generating capacities should stipulate special social support areas for laid-off personnel, including a set of measures for advanced re-training, relocation and employment of potentially redundant personnel.

Recapping the issues discussed at the meeting, Minister of Energy A.V. Novak confirmed the SRA's significant role in the power sector as the key instrument in shaping and developing the single system of the sector's social partnership; he also expressed his readiness to apply to Deputy Prime Minister I.I. Shuvalov concerning the problem of increasing efficiency in ensuring that power sector employers' SRA-based "social" obligations were incorporated in their rates.

In 2016, the Trade union paid great attention to the issues of developing and introducing professional standards.

Professional standards are developed in accordance with the sector's priority industrial processes and the jobs of the greatest significance for implementing those processes; said jobs are tied to the All-Russia Economic Activity Classification System, which allows vertically integrated professional standards to be developed to take into account all the qualification levels within the framework of specific business processes (technological, manufacturing). Such an approach would permit professional standards to be turned into multi-purpose instruments and this, in turn, would allow the following: finding systemic solutions for professional education tasks and personnel training; carrying out work on professional orientation and career planning; resolving a broad range of issues in personnel management (applied to developing business

standards, personnel motivation and incentive systems, job descriptions, wage determination, personnel hiring); carrying out procedures for standardisation and unification within each economic activity (developing and maintaining unified requirements for the contents and quality of professional performance); introducing procedures for independent assessment and qualification recognition.

In some sectors, professional standards are developed by educational institutions and various expert organisations with insufficient standing in the sectors' professional communities; in the power sector, by contrast, this is done by the All-Russia Industrial Association of Employers of the Power Sector (ARIAEPS) and the All-Russia Sectoral Union of Power Sector Employers (ARSUPSE), the key participants in developing professional standards in the power sector as part of implementing the relevant Order of the President of the Russian Federation.

On 22 October 2014, the decision was made to form a Council on Professional Qualifications in the Power Sector (CPQ); the AREPTU's Chair V.N. Vakhrushkin participates in the Council's work. Since the Council started its work, it has considered and approved 38 professional standards; work is under way on universal assessment means for determining professional qualifications; principal sectoral standards for higher education have been approved; many more projects are being implemented as part of the reform of the National System of Professional Qualifications.

The power sector still fails to include economically sound payroll costs in its full rates, and that remains a most pressing problem.

Via the Russian Three-Party Commission on Regulating Social and Labour Relations (RTPC), the Trade union participates in improving the legislation and in standard-setting on rates regulation at the state level.

Thus, on the initiative of the All-Russia Energy Trade union and the All-Russia Industrial Association of Employers of the Power Sector (ARIAEPS), the RTPC's meeting on 25 December 2015 considered the issue of "The principal approaches to state control and the results of monitoring compliance with regulated prices (rates) of the products (services) of the natural monopolies, price and rate caps set at the federal level for 2015."

The meeting resulted in the suggestion that the Ministry for Economic Development of the Russian Federation, jointly with the Federal Antimonopoly Service (the FAS), the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Labour of the Russian Federation, and representatives of all-Russia unions of employers hold a meeting on including employers' socially-determined expenses stipulated by Sectoral Rates agreements in electricity and heating rates.

It was also suggested that the FAS consider taking into account Sectoral Rates agreements in various economic sectors when determining rates at the FAS Methodological Council.

In accordance with decisions of the Russian Three-Party Commission on Regulating Social and Labour Relations, on 3 March 2016, a meeting on electricity and heating tariffs incorporating employers' socially-determined expenses stipulated by Sectoral Rates agreements was held at the Ministry of Energy of Russia with the participation of representatives of the All-Russia Energy Trade union, the Industrial Association of Employers of the Power Sector, and major power companies. At the meeting, social partners in the power sector presented the "Conceptual Position of the Industrial Association of Employers of the Power Sector and the All-Russia Energy Trade union on Incorporating Rates Agreements (SRA Parties' Expenses) in Rates Regulation" at the sectoral level.

On 31 March 2016, an extended meeting of the FAS Methodological Council on rate regulation was held at the Federal Antimonopoly Service (FAS); the meeting considered the issue of taking Sectoral Rates agreements into account when making decisions on rate regulations.

Pursuant to the discussion, a decision was made to form at the FAS a Working Group on developing draft Methodological Recommendations on the rules for incorporating economically sound payroll costs stipulated by sectoral rates agreements into the rates. It was suggested that

the working group include representatives of all-Russia unions of employers and all-Russia sectoral trade union federations.

On 12 October 2016, the Working Group met at the FAS to consider the draft Methodological Recommendations on the rules for incorporating economically sound payroll costs stipulated by sectoral rates agreements into the rates (hereinafter referred to as the Methodological Recommendations).

Heads of all-Russia employers' unions and sectoral trade unions, and representatives of major companies subject to state regulation took part in discussing the draft Methodological Recommendations prepared by the FAS professionals and submitted for consideration by the Working Group.

Pursuant to a comprehensive discussion of the draft Methodological Recommendations submitted by the FAS, the members of the Working Group concluded that the draft needed further work and its consideration should be deferred until a later meeting of the RTPC.

Since the 2014-2016 Sectoral Agreement on the Machine-Building Complex of the Russian Federation expires in 2016, the All-Russia Electric Power Trade union, jointly with the Trade union of the Workers of the Automotive and Agricultural Machine-Building of the Russian Federation and the Trade union of the Machine-Builders of the Russian Federation, prepared an Agreement on amending the 2014-2016 sectoral agreement on the machine-building complex of the Russian Federation and prolonging its validity, with amendments, for 2017-2019 (registered with the Federal Service for Labour and Employment [*Rostrud*] on 27 July 2016, registration number 8/17-19); the Agreement was signed on 20 June 2016 with the All-Russia Sectoral Employers' Union "Union of Machine-Builders of Russia."

As of 1 January 2016, 1,151 local trade unions of power sector and electric engineering enterprises were registered with the All-Russia Electric Power Trade union (AREPTU) public organisation; in total, the enterprises' employed 637,000 people, including 434,000 trade union members.

As of 31 December 2015, the organisations in the above-mentioned sectors with active local trade unions had concluded 825 currently valid collective bargaining agreements. In 2015, collective bargaining agreements covered 608,125 employees (95.47%) and 422,009 trade union members (97.36%). Several organisations do not have collective bargaining agreements, mostly owing to the small numbers of employees.

As before, the principal disagreements in the collective bargaining process on concluding and prolonging the validity of the collective bargaining agreements arose mostly on the issues of labour remuneration and its adjustment.

Federal Service for State Statistics (*Rosstat*) data show that average nominal accrued wage for workers employed in manufacturing, transmitting, and distributing power in Russia as a whole was RUB 46,553 in 2015 (RUB 46,033 in 2014).

In 2015, the average nominal accrued wage for workers in the electrical engineering sector grew compared to 2014 (RUB 32,779) to RUB 36,765, which is 108.3% of the 2015 average nominal accrued wage in the Russian Federation as a whole (RUB 34,030).

The average nominal accrued wage for workers in the economy of the Russian Federation as a whole in November 2016 was RUB 36,195.

At year-end 2016, annual inflation in Russia was 5.4%. It should be noted that this is a record low inflation for Russia. Compared to 2015, inflation had more than halved: in 2015, inflation was 12.9%. The low inflation rate can be largely explained by the significant drop in the population's real income, which has been falling for three years running. The pace of the decrease in the population's real income has risen to nearly 6% from 3.2% in 2015 and 0.7% in 2014.

At the same time, owing to the increase in global oil prices in 2016, the roubles became significantly stronger (as of 31 December 2015, USD 1 = RUB 72.8827; as of 31 December 2016, USD 1 = RUB 60.6569), which, to some extent, influenced the increase in the purchasing power of wages.

Kazakhstan

Health workers Union of Kazakhstan

The country's objective economic development indicators have afforded opportunities for intensive development and for launch of priority national projects, including a new social policy for ensuring a long and healthy life for Kazakhstan's citizens.

In the last 10 years alone, Kazakhstan's healthcare budget has quadrupled. Implementation of Salamatty Kazakhstan, the 2011–2015 State Healthcare Development Programme, has contributed to life expectancy rising from 68.4 years in 2010 to 72 years in 2015; maternal and child mortality have dropped.

The crucial role in shaping a healthy nation is assigned to introducing compulsory medical insurance under the State Programme – the Nation's "100 Concrete Steps" Plan. Kazakhstan's trade union participated in drafting the law on compulsory medical insurance.

The Kazakhstan sectoral trade union of health workers, to which nearly 90% of the sector's employees belong, participates most actively in implementing the set task and always advocates political and social stability, and observance of employees' legitimate rights and interests. This is largely why we have succeeded in retaining several social guarantees the Trade union had been defending in previous years.

As of 1 January 2017, the sectoral trade union had 303,818 members employed in healthcare organisations and studying in vocational medical colleges and higher educational medical institutions.

Under the sectoral trade union's unified charter, it has 977 local trade unions organised into 14 regional and two territorial branches.

2016 witnessed several crucial decisions being taken both for the country's healthcare and for the sectoral trade union. The Densauyk Programme for 2016-2019, a state healthcare development programme, was developed to support and develop the results already achieved and find the latest solutions to pressing problems in public healthcare. A vital task envisioned in the Densauyk State Programme is to modernise the national healthcare system.

Given the circumstances, the Trade union and all its structures are faced with adapting the practical work of its elected bodies to the changes taking place, becoming an active participant in these changes and preventing infringement of the rights and interests of trade union members. This new instrument for effective protection must be used at every stage of the reforms.

An important event that directly influenced the interests of working people was the introduction of a new payment system for employees working in the public sector, for organisations financed out of the state budget and for public enterprises.

The Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan passed an Order "On the new payment system for employees working in the public sector, for organisations financed out of the state budget and for public enterprises."

Over the last six years, the sectoral trade union has participated most actively in developing the new payment system, maintaining connections with the branches and local unions throughout. Suggestions and additional proposals from regular members were taken into account, especially when developing the functional blocks of the Register of Employee Positions with due regard for their qualification and education level.

As part of the sectoral trade union's practical work, amendments were made to the Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan effective as of 1 January 2016. Amendments were made to the sections on payment for labour, labour relations and the work-to-rest ratio. Moreover, the Code included new requirements on sectoral agreements and collective bargaining agreements, including ones setting specific stipulations on developing social partnership.

N.A. Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, has signed Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Compulsory Medical Insurance." The instrument stipulates introduction in Kazakhstan of a medical insurance system developed using the most advanced international experience and based on joint responsibility of the state, employer and each individual.

In this connection, the sectoral trade union participated actively in the state campaign run jointly with the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The campaign presents the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Compulsory Medical Insurance"; seminars explaining the principal articles and stipulations of the new law have been held for chairmen of regional trade union branches.

Public monitoring of compliance with the stipulations of the labour legislation is a constant focus on the part of trade union bodies. The most important and problematic aspects have been included in the current agreements and collective bargaining agreements, including such aspects as prevention of discrimination against people over the age of 50 and creation of a decent working environment.

During the year, after sub-paragraph 5, paragraph 2, article 182 of the new Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan came into force, the Central Council of the Trade union received numerous letters from union members.

The sub-paragraph mandated "not allowing persons who reach retirement age under the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan 'On Retirement Benefits in the Republic of Kazakhstan' to perform heavy work or to work in a harmful and (or) hazardous environment."

The healthcare system is particularly affected by this sub-paragraph coming into force, since all healthcare personnel (doctors, nursing staff and paramedical personnel) belong to this category of employee.

Today, doctors who reach or are nearing retirement age make up 22.7% of all doctors in the healthcare system; for nursing staff, the number is 11.4%. The problem is particularly acute in rural areas.

At the same time, the number of doctors due for retirement and nearing retirement age will keep increasing and, by 2018, they will constitute over 30% of the total; this prediction is borne out by statistical data.

In this connection, we sent a letter to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan requesting that sub-paragraph 5, paragraph 2, article 182 be excluded from the Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan and a letter to the Minister of Healthcare and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan requesting that relevant local audits by the Department of Employment be suspended until the issue has been resolved.

As a result, the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan amended the Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The issues of socioeconomic and labour interests of employees cannot be separated from organisation of work throughout the sector. The crucial mechanism for legally regulating these priorities consists in the principles of social partnership that have taken shape within the sector over a number of years and are now effective at all levels: republican, territorial, and healthcare organisation.

In 2016, for the first time in the practice of social partnership, we signed a trilateral sectoral agreement. The National Healthcare Chamber acted and the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan were the social partners.

Fulfilment of the obligations undertaken by the parties is considered each quarter at joint

meetings of the sectoral trilateral commission on social partnership and regulation of social and labour relations between the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kazakhstan sectoral trade union of health workers and the National Healthcare Chamber.

One specific feature of the current situation is linked to the reforms currently being implemented in healthcare, in particular, to the transformation of several public healthcare organisations into enterprises “with the right to operational control.”

Pursuant to the law “On State Property,” a state-owned enterprise “with the right to operational control” is a commercial organisation to which the state has allocated property on the basis of the right to operational control and which is liable for its obligations to the full extent of the property it owns.

During this transitional period, one of the priorities for the sectoral trade union was to ensure that persons employed by enterprises “with the right to operational control” received wages equal to those of public employees.

Under the Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, employees of such enterprises lose their public employee status, so also such employees’ legally determined benefits. Under such circumstances, the trade unions had to ensure there would be no reduction in the previously achieved level of employee rights, using new economic leverage and the independence of the above-mentioned enterprises for this purpose.

In 2016, in order to implement a series of measures ensuring the employee’s right to decent labour and wages, the sectoral agreement was amended and supplemented.

One important addition was a paragraph stipulating that, when public enterprises change their type of incorporation to “enterprise with the right to operational control” or when they are transferred into fiduciary management, their employees retain their right to basic paid vacation of at least 30 calendar days, with payment of a wellness subsidy in the amount of the position salary; the paragraph also sets the minimum position salaries and supplemental payments.

The principal factor in preserving the life and health of the sector’s employees is provision of a safe working environment and modernisation of existing work places. The sectoral trade union focuses consistently on these tasks.

Under paragraph 5, article 153 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Council of the Trade union approved the “Statute of the Sectoral Council on work safety and health protection”, “Standard statute on the entrepreneurial Council on work safety and health protection in healthcare organisations of the Republic of Kazakhstan” and the “Standard statute on work safety technical inspectors in healthcare organisations of the Republic of Kazakhstan.”

The articles of the currently effective agreement and collective bargaining agreements stipulate that consultations be held and a joint action plan be drawn up for improving the working environment and work safety, including with respect to financing measures for employee work safety and health protection.

To that end, the sectoral agreement was supplemented with a clause on allocating financing for work safety and health protection measures when the Republic’s budget is drawn up. Such measures would include expenditures on providing employees with workwear, on a stable supply of special foods pursuant to the list and standards set by the authorised labour agency; on mandatory employer-financed annual medical examinations for the sector’s employees.

Currently, work on organising and managing labour protection in organisations is carried out in accordance with the 2015-2020 Programme of Activities of the Kazakhstan sectoral trade union of health workers, the purpose of which is to improve the working environment and hygiene and wellness measures in work safety and health protection.

Youth outreach is a topical issue faced by the Trade union. 56.7% of people under 35 are trade union members, which evidences the active outreach efforts to involve young people who are studying and working in trade unions. The sectoral trade union has a Youth Policy Concept for

protecting young people's rights and legitimate interests, carrying out legal information campaigns, informing young people about opportunities for exercising their rights in the area of social and labour relations, and encouraging them to become trade union members.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan's Trade Union of Power Sector Employees

As of 1 January 2016, Tajikistan's energy sector had over 10,000 employees. Socioeconomic and legal protection for Tajikistan's energy sector employees is provided jointly by Tajikistan's Federation of Independent Trade Unions and OSHC Barki Tojik.

The issues of social security for trade union members are included in the General Agreement between the Government of Tajikistan, Tajikistan's Federation of Independent Unions, and the Union of Employers of the Republic of Tajikistan for the years 2015-2017 and in the Sectoral Rates Agreement between OSHC Barki Tojik and the Republican Committee of Tajikistan's Trade Union of Power Sector Employees for the years 2017-2019.

As of 01 January 2016, 90% of the sector's organisations had concluded collective bargaining agreements, 8% more than in 2015. To ensure social security for power sector employees, improve their working environment and conduct a more active youth outreach in the power sector, the following work was done in 2016:

- 4 praesidium meetings and 1 plenary session were held;
- approximately 30 seminars, meetings and roundtables were organised; their participants included active trade union members, veterans and youth; subjects covered included various areas of trade union work, such as social partnership, wages, legal protection for trade union members, collective bargaining, concluding collective bargaining agreements and monitoring compliance with said agreements, regulating labour relations, labour protection, representing employees' interests in various agencies; organisation of leisure time, vacations, labour protection, workplace assessment; increasing the role of trade unions in society, and the topical issue of preventing youth terrorism and extremism;
- a Youth Council was established in each local trade union;
- in the summer of 2016, summer rest and wellness programmes at health resorts were organised for children; as part of the effort, more than 1,000 children of power sector employees vacationed and received wellness treatment;
- to improve the health of power sector employees and their family members, over 400 subsidised vouchers to Tajikistan's health resorts were issued to the employees;
- a series of mass cultural and sports and wellness events was held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Tajikistan's independence, the 50th anniversary of the Republican Committee of the Trade Union of the Power Sector Employees and Tajikistan's Power Sector Employee Day.

As in 2015, an active information campaign was conducted to convey the information to trade union members (central and regional media and the Internet were used); the union held seminars, discussions, individual talks; posters, banners, speeches at staff meetings and conferences were also employed.

As of 01 January 2016, the average wage in Tajikistan was 1,060 somoni (USD 140) and, in the power sector, it was 1,486 somoni (USD 195.5). There are no wages owed in 2016.

Owing to personnel shortages, in 2015, the Moscow Power Engineering Institute (MPEI) opened a branch in Dushanbe under an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Russian Federation. Thousands of Tajikistan's future power sector employees are currently studying at the MPEI branch. Given young people's contribution to developing society and their active participation in the country's political and economic life, 2017 has been declared the Year of

Youth in Tajikistan. The trade union's plans for the Year of Youth involve establishing four scholarships for A-students of the MPEI branch in Dushanbe.

Over the years of independence, despite many difficulties and obstacles, Tajikistan has laid the foundations for of its sovereign state and embarked on a path of constructive achievements: ensuring its energy independence; taking the country out of the communications impasse; protecting its food security, improving the people's quality of life.

In the reporting year, the Government succeeded in investing 36 bn somoni in ensuring the country's energy independence, in constructing and launching crucial small and large power-generating and transmitting facilities. In particular, the government formed Tajikistan's unified power grid and launched new power facilities with a capacity of over 1,300 megawatts.

It should be noted that, in percentage terms, international financial organisations place Tajikistan among the world's top six countries generating the biggest volumes of "green," i.e., environmentally-friendly, energy. 98% of Tajikistan's energy today is green. This is Tajikistan's contribution to preventing the destructive consequences of global warming and to implementation of regional and global environmental measures. Over the 25 years of independence, domestic and foreign investments have been used to construct thousands of small and big industrial enterprises and facilities that operate in manufacturing and processing of minerals and coal, in the light and chemical industries, in engineering, in processing of precious and non-ferrous metals, in construction materials, and in the food industry.

Since no country can progress without developing its energy sector, the Government has set achievement of energy independence and efficient use of electric power among the country's strategic goals. To achieve this goal and ensure efficient use of major energy resources, 11 state investment projects are currently being implemented. Hydropower plants are being constructed; other power-generating facilities have also been constructed and rebuilt, such as the first and second construction stages of CHPP Dushanbe-2 with a capacity of 400 megawatts. These projects are intended to provide various facilities and Dushanbe residents with heating and to reduce the power shortages in winter. Reconstruction of the Sarband hydropower plant is now underway; the cost of the project is 1.1 bn somoni. In 2017, the first reconstruction stage is slated to start at the Nurek HPP (at a cost of 3 bn somoni) and at the Kairakkum HPP (at a cost of 600 m somoni). Construction of the Rogun HPP's dam launched a short while ago is an important historical milestone. Since the start of rebuilding and construction on the site, the financing has amounted to 12 bn somoni, including 2,800 bn in 2016. This momentous project has been expedited and its first unit is slated to become operational before the end of 2018.

The principal task for power sector employees in the near future is to ensure a stable and permanent supply of electric power to all consumers by increasing the volume of energy generated, making management more efficient and implementing priority investment projects. In this connection, the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources and OSHC Barki Tojik need to carry out the principal work in this area, to ensure strict and precise metering in order to cut losses. It should also be borne in mind that the population and the number of enterprises are growing along with the rising volumes of generated power, so the demand for power demand is going up as well. Consequently, when planning construction of residential buildings and manufacturing facilities, making new facilities operational, importing technologies, home appliances and equipment, their energy-saving features should be taken into account; consumers should be educated in energy saving and frugality. It should be noted that, starting 05 January of the current year, restrictions on energy supplies to Tajikistan's population have been completely lifted.

In May 2016, Tajikistan, with the participation of the Presidents of four countries (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Afghanistan), began implementing CASA-1000, a regional high-voltage power line project. The purpose of CASA-1000 is to make sustainable use of natural resources.

Upon the project's completion, electric power will be transmitted by high-voltage power lines from the Kyrgyz Republic to Tajikistan (477 km) and from Tajikistan to Afghanistan and Pakistan (another 750 km). Central Asian countries have enough surplus electric power to ensure full use of the power line's capacity even without new power-generating facilities being launched.

This project is a historic landmark in the cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. CASA-1000, a modern and efficient power line system, will help transform the region and will constitute an important step toward forming the Central and South Asia Regional Energy Market (CASAREM). The CASAREM initiative will benefit these four countries and will also improve the power transmission systems and stimulate interregional cooperation between the countries of Central and South Asia.

The CASA-1000 project is ambitious, yet feasible. Compared to the North American (340,000 kilometre) or European (230,000 kilometre) distribution networks, the CASA-1000 power line project is quite feasible, yet it requires time, long-term planning and cooperation.

The Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan have formed an Intergovernmental Council, an important structure that will serve as the foundation for implementing the CASA-1000 project. Besides the above-mentioned countries, the project is supported by the World Bank Group, the Islamic Development Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the US Department of State, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and several other donor organisations.

Ultimately, implementing this large-scale and ambitious project will ensure a stable and inexpensive supply of power to the areas with the highest demand in both summer and winter.

Health Workers Union of Tajikistan

The reporting year 2016 was marked by international tension and increasing financial and economic crisis, which resulted, specifically, in decreasing economic activity, rising unemployment, a falling standard of living in post-Soviet countries, currency devaluation in some states and an unprecedented "explosion" of the immigration problem.

The issues of social protection for medical workers during the economic crisis are included in the 2015—2017 General Agreement between the Government of the republic, Tajikistan's Federation of Independent Trade Unions and the Union of Employers of the Republic of Tajikistan; they are also part of the 2016—2018 Sectoral Agreement between the Ministry of Public Health and Social Security of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republican Committee of Tajikistan's Trade Union of Healthcare Workers. These agreements aim to ensure that each of the sector's workers has a quality job, a fair wage, safe working environment and the freedom to enjoy their rights. As of 01 January 2017, 90% of the sector's institutions had concluded collective bargaining agreements, meaning a 10% growth of this indicator since 2012.

In order to implement the General Agreement between the Government of the republic, Tajikistan's Federation of Independent Trade Unions, and the Union of Employers of the Republic of Tajikistan, as well as the Sectoral Agreement between the Ministry of Public Health and Social Security of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republican Committee of Tajikistan's Trade Union of Healthcare Workers, the Government of Tajikistan and the Ministry of Public Health and Social Security of the Republic of Tajikistan, with support from international organisations, carried out significant work to reform the healthcare sector in Tajikistan.

2016 marked the 25th anniversary of Tajikistan's independence. During the 25 years of its independence, despite many difficulties and hurdles, Tajikistan laid the foundations of its sovereign state and embarked on a path of constructive achievements: ensuring its energy

independence; taking the country out of the communications impasse; protecting its food security, and improving people's quality of life. Great successes have been achieved over the 25 years.

Owing to implementation of national strategies and programmes, the last 15 years have seen a 7.8% average annual economic growth in Tajikistan. State budget revenues increased from 300 m somoni to 18 n somoni. At the same time, the population's incomes grew 25-fold and their bank deposits over 85-fold. Much is being done to create new jobs, both permanent and seasonal. Implementation of the adopted programmes allowed for an annual average GDP increase of over 7%. Despite the falling national currency in relation to foreign currencies, consumer prices remain at a normal level and inflation is 6%.

Maternal mortality dropped 1.8-fold, child mortality dropped 2.7-fold and the danger of the spread of dangerous contagious diseases has been eliminated. During the independence period, Tajikistan's population grew annually by 2.5%, that is, 1.6-fold, from 5.5 million to 8.7 million; at the same time, the standard and quality of life have improved substantially and average life expectancy has increased to 73.5 years.

Over the 25 years of independence, 129,000 hectares were allocated for construction of housing for 1.3 million families, that is, for over 7 million people. The conditions and quality of life of Tajikistan's population have been gradually improving.

During the independence period, creating new jobs has been one of the priorities for the Government's social policy. In 2013—2016 alone, over half a million new jobs were created and the process of the Government of Tajikistan creating jobs, jointly with the private sector, continues.

One of the priorities of independent Tajikistan's social policies is a gradual increase in the minimum and average wages for employees of various sectors, in consideration of real financial possibilities. Over the last ten years, the minimum wage has gone up 29-fold and the average wage nearly 28-fold. Since 1997, the nominal wage has risen nearly 70-fold and the average pension 85-fold. In addition, in accordance with the measures following Tajikistan's wage reform, wages and pensions have been progressively increased by an average of 15—20%, which contributes to improving the quality of life and enhancing social security for the population. During the first years of independence (1992—1995), wages and pensions were minuscule and were not even paid on time. Doctors' salaries were 3-5 somoni (5 USD), state officials' were 15—17 somoni (17 USD). Given that improving the standard and quality of life and the social security of the population were top priorities for Tajikistan's government in 2014—2016, despite the global economic crisis, 52% of the Republic's budget was allocated for Tajikistan's social sphere.

In order to carry out the action points contained in the President's previous Address to the Parliament, public sector employees' wages, as well as pensions and stipends, were raised by 15—30% from 01 July 2016. It should be noted that over the last five years, public sector employees' wages have doubled and pensions have increased 1.6-fold. As of 01 January 2016, the average wage in Tajikistan was 1,060 somoni (140 USD), and 832 somoni (110 USD) in the healthcare system. As a result, there was a two-thirds reduction in poverty. Over the last 5 years, financing of the healthcare system has been gradually increasing and, in 2011—2012, it was 2% of GDP, 2.1% in 2013; 2.2% in 2014; 2.3% in 2015 and 2016, and 2.4% of GDP is allocated for these purposes in 2017.

Over the last 15 year only, financing of the healthcare system has grown 19-fold, the aim being to improve the quality of life and doctors' efficiency; currently, over 20 national programmes are being implemented. During the last five years, the Government developed several legal regulations on labour protection; introduction of these regulations will undoubtedly result in an improved working environment of trade union members. Since 2014, the infrastructure in the healthcare system and primary healthcare has been improved significantly. In addition to funds

allocated from the state budget, 30 projects worth USD 100 m are being implemented in healthcare and social security.

Tajikistan's government has proclaimed the population's health to be the country's national wealth and, over the 25 years of independence, construction, renovation and overhaul have been completed on 1,000 healthcare institution in various cities and regions of the country; these institutions include hospitals, medical centres, diagnostics and treatment centres, as well as outpatient clinics and health resorts furnished with state-of-the-art medical equipment. Such measures, including importing state-of-the-art equipment and technologies, have contributed to improving both the working environment for the sector's employees and the quality of diagnostics, examination and treatment of patients. As a result, the number of Tajikistan citizens travelling abroad for treatment has dropped significantly. Nonetheless, it should be noted that some aspects require further improvement, such as hiring quality personnel, the standard of professional training in medical schools and vocational colleges, including training in operating state-of-the-art medical equipment, in diagnosing and treating certain diseases. In order to eliminate one of the sector's problems, namely, personnel shortages, especially in remote villages, a new Medical University was opened in February 2016 in the Khatlon Region and, in September, a medical vocational college was opened in the Rasht District; the college already has over 1,000 students.

Since Tajikistan's youth contribute significantly to society's development and participate actively in the country's political and economic life, 2017 has been declared the Year of Youth in Tajikistan. Enhancing and using the potential of young people, raising their professional standard and their social security, as well as additional training and re-training of medical personnel, are tasks to be constantly monitored not only by the Ministry for Public Health and Social Security, but also by the sector's trade unions.

The Republican committee has studied the morbidity with temporal disability among Tajikistan's medical workers under the current socioeconomic conditions.

The patterns for morbidity with short-term disability (SD) among medical workers are topped, in decreasing order of incidence and the number of days of short-term disability, by diseases of the respiratory organs, of the genitourinary system and of cardiovascular organs. Then follow the diseases of the digestive organs, the musculoskeletal system, pregnancy and post-natal complications, injuries and poisonings, and diseases of the nervous system.

Among professional groups, the highest SD incidence is recorded among workers of outpatient clinics, followed by GPs and surgeons. While the research was being conducted, Tajikistan as a whole, as well as individual regions, saw an increase in the incidence and in the number of days of SD. Starting in 2012, incidence of such diseases as hypertension, coronary artery disease, diseases of the nervous system, musculoskeletal system, digestive organs, kidneys, and diseases of the urinary tract, as well as injuries etc. has been on the rise.

In order to prevent disease and improve the health of healthcare workers, 2,500 vouchers for Tajikistan's health resorts were paid for out the state social security budget in 2016. A series of meetings and roundtables was organised jointly with employers in preparation for and celebration of the birthday of the Tajik scientist, philosopher and medic Avicenna, the Day of the Medical Worker of the Republic of Tajikistan, the 25th anniversary of Independence of the Republic of Tajikistan, World Health Day on 7 April, the World Day for Decent Work on 7 October 2016. The issues considered at the meetings and roundtables included social security for members of trade unions, introduction of the new Labour Code; sports events, health events, mass cultural events in Dushanbe, regional centres and several districts of republican subordination were also held; participants included employers, representatives of the government, celebrity singers; in their speeches, trade union leaders drew the attention of the local authorities and the central government to the need to ensure that, in the foreseeable future, each of the sector's workers has a quality job, a fair wage, safe working environment and the freedom to enjoy their rights.