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ETUCE

European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

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The ETUCE CEE Roundtable, meeting in Bucharest, Romania, on 19 - 21 October 2015,

In light of the resolutions adopted at the [ETUCE Special Conference in Vienna](#) in 2014, notably the resolution on the [Teaching Profession of the 21st Century](#) and the resolution on the [Impact of Neoliberal Policies on Education](#), and in view of the resolutions adopted by [EI World Conference in Ottawa in 2015](#) and of the EI Global initiative *The Global Response to Commercialisation and Privatisation in and of Education*,

Declares that:

- **Education is a fundamental human right which is above all a prerequisite for a socially just and peaceful society** based on understanding of and respect for others. Therefore education plays an important role in preventing violence and conflicts and in encouraging mutual understanding of all people. CEE countries are still facing specific challenges derived from their common historical background and, as such, they put great effort in ensuring that education is sustainable, inclusive and equally accessible and available for all;
- **Education staff and teacher unions in CEE countries have a critical role to take on in promoting equality** and in tackling inequality in education, including that based on ethnicity, religion and nationality. This is especially true for the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalised and concerns girls and boys, Roma, LGBT people, refugees, migrants and people with special needs alike;
- In CEE countries **public investment in education should be sufficient, predictable and sustainable** and should be designed to ensure that all citizens have equitable access to a full cycle of quality education, to tackle the level of inequality and to ensure that the poorest in society move out of poverty;
- In several CEE countries, the need for national reforms of education systems pre-dates the economic crisis. However, **recently undertaken reform measures based on the neoliberal paradigm and on the need to consolidate public finances** are an increasing burden for teachers and other education staff;
- In many CEE countries, **emerging privatisation trends** – especially in the sectors of early childhood and higher education – are hampering equity of access and participation to education, reducing education to a commodity versus a public good, and infringing education as a human right;
- Many years of economic crisis have had a detrimental impact on education staff and teachers' salaries, working conditions and their status in CEE countries, also further affecting recruitment and retention of qualified teachers and other education staff. **Effective and efficient social dialogue and collective bargaining is key to ensure the provision of high quality education**, based on fair salaries and decent working conditions for education staff, adequate social protection, high quality initial training and continuous professional development for education

staff, quality tools for teaching, and healthy and safe environments for teaching and learning; **Governments should not only consult teacher unions ahead of a reform, teacher unions' opinions should be fully taken into consideration by means of effective social dialogue;**

- Teacher unions in CEE countries continue to oppose in solidarity **any attempt to exclude teacher unions from discussions** related to teachers' professional issues in favour of government-friendly associations that claim to represent teachers albeit they disrespect the democratic procedures of representation, as well as any attempt to deny the legitimacy of teacher unions;
- CEE countries have been **modernising their education system** through an increasing use of ICT in education. In this frame, teacher unions should be recognised as key social partners for creating a political vision in this field and raising the expectations of using ICT effectively in education institutions. It is clear that new technologies should be used as supplements to, and not replacements for, in-class instruction;

Asserts the commitment of the teacher unions in the CEE countries to:

- Call for publicly funded and accessible education for all, promote a fair tax system and denounce the role of private providers in financing, delivering and managing education institutions and/or education services resulting in increased discrimination, social fragmentation and widening inequality;
- Continue to engage in actions aimed at improving social dialogue and collective bargaining negotiations at national, regional and local level to ensure an increase of funding in education and teachers' salaries, equal access to and provision of quality education for all learners, and with a view to increase the status of teachers and to improve the image of the teaching profession in society;
- Strengthen solidarity among teacher unions in the region and within the whole teacher union movement in Europe and at global level through the actions of CEENET, ETUCE and EI;
- Defend this declaration in the respective countries by raising awareness on it amongst affiliates and through an effective and efficient social dialogue with national authorities; social dialogue must be a dialogue, not a monologue;
- Support ETUCE to defend this declaration at European level through an effective and efficient dialogue with the European Union and the Council of Europe;
- Take an intra-national approach rather than an individual national approach in implementing this declaration;
- Ensure that the views of ETUCE member organisations in CEE countries are promoted in all ETUCE/EI decision-making bodies;
- Support the EI *Global Response* initiative with the aim to raise awareness that commercialisation and privatisation in and of education undermine quality public education and are detrimental to the interests of society. The teacher unions of CEE countries will join this important global initiative by engaging in the ETUCE

Complementary Strategy Plan on the EI Global Response, for a more democratic and better future for all.