

# Resolution

## Defending higher education and research in an age of crises

Adopted by the ETUCE Conference, the Regional Conference of Education International, on 26-27 November 2024

Further to and consistent with the Resolutions adopted by the [9th and 10th EI Congress](#) in Buenos Aires in 2024, the [Resolutions](#) adopted by the ETUCE Conference in 2020, the ETUCE Extraordinary Conference in 2021, and the ETUCE Special Conference in Liège in 2022, this ETUCE Conference:

### Notes with concern that:

1. The cost-of-living crisis and pressures caused by the digitalisation and green transition of society have accelerated calls for higher education and research (HER) to prioritise labour market outcomes and links with the private sector.
2. Sufficient, long-term and predictable core public funding for HER is being superseded by funding that is short-term, competitive and unpredictable, while peer review of teaching and research is being displaced by quantitative metrics and 'accountability' measures. Such policies are fuelling the rise in short-termism and precarious employment, contributing to the erosion of academic freedom and threatening the quality of HER.
3. The costs of studying (i.e. learning material and higher tuition fees) and living costs for both national and international students and staff are limiting equal access to higher education institutions and increasing early drop out without graduation, thus creating greater social inequalities.
4. Increased political and ideological attacks on academics and higher education and research institutions are restricting essential freedoms to teach and research and undermining academic freedom, institutional autonomy, the self-governance of higher education teaching personnel and academic integrity.

- 35 5. Rising nationalism is making it much harder for international students and staff to study and  
36 work in HER in Europe.  
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38 6. Digitalisation, automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are developing at pace in the higher  
39 education sector, with significant implications for academic job roles, and for intellectual  
40 property rights, privacy, infrastructure and public responsibility.  
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42 7. The continuing erosion of meaningful collective bargaining and social dialogue has  
43 contributed to further salary erosion, as well as greater workloads, pay inequalities, precarity  
44 and job insecurity in HER.  
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### 47 **Calls on ETUCE and member organisations:**

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49 1. To demand increased structural public investment as a pre-requisite for quality and inclusive  
50 higher education and research and to oppose cuts to higher education and research budgets.  
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52 2. To address the gender pay and pension gaps which are still present in the higher education  
53 and research sector.  
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55 3. To denounce the overwhelming precarity of higher education staff employed with contracts,  
56 which harms long termed research projects.  
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58 4. To challenge attempts by governments and companies to fund a limited range of disciplines  
59 and research projects - often only guided by perceived labour market relevance -, and to  
60 advocate a more equal and balanced relationship between HER institutions and the labour  
61 market.  
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63 5. To ensure that the protection and promotion of academic freedom and other fundamental  
64 values such as institutional autonomy and staff and student participation in governance is  
65 central to HER in Europe.  
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67 6. To highlight the essential role of HER in strengthening democracy, fighting against hate speech  
68 and violence, and contributing to peace and environmental sustainability.  
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70 7. To implement financial support and welfare service for students to secure them with decent  
71 accommodation, sufficient food and enough funding for their studies all along their curricula.  
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73 8. To push for meaningful collective bargaining and social dialogue at the national and European  
74 level, including in developing areas like the digital and green transitions.  
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76 9. To ensure a strong union voice in the HER work initiated by the European Commission, the  
77 Council of Europe and within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, Bologna Process  
78 countries).  
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- 80 10. Call on European governments and the European Commission to implement and respect the  
81 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching  
82 Personnel and the 2017 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Science and Scientific  
83 Researchers.  
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- 85 11. To continue to use the ETUCE's Higher Education and Research Standing Committee as a  
86 means to develop trade union strategy on European policies affecting higher education and  
87 research staff within the European Union and the Bologna Process countries, and to  
88 strengthen solidarity among member organisations in the sector and beyond, including  
89 sharing information, strategy and experience.