

Resolution

Uniting against separation and hate - Advocating for inclusion and equity

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, the ETUCE Special Conference in Liège in 2022, and the [ETUCE Action Plan on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#), this ETUCE Conference:

Notes that:

1. Shaken by a variety of serious upheavals including the recent pandemic, socio-economic and energy crises, climate change threats and national disasters, war, armed conflicts, and other, European societies find themselves in state of increasing political and ideological polarisation, divisive nationalist tendencies, xenophobia, hate speech and radicalisation, socio-economic inequalities and social exclusion. More and more people in Europe experience a sense of isolation and disconnection, especially in education institutions where they should learn about being an active member of society and their role in society. Education, often regarded as a beacon of European values, equality and progress, finds itself entangled in a complex web of challenges stemming from various socio-political contexts.
2. At a global and European level, the unprecedented rise of far-right and radicalised movements casts a shadow over the principles of inclusion and tolerance that underpin our education systems. Recent trends highlight the emergence of alarming phenomena such as a new wave of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-migrant and anti-refugees discourses and continued anti-feminism. These manifestations of hate not only threaten the democratic foundation of our societies but also pose significant challenges for education personnel striving to foster inclusive and equitable learning environments.
3. Furthermore, some governments and politicians are using the classroom as a battlefield for their political ideas and education for separating people and inciting hatred among them, re-

32 writing history books to favour a nationalist approach, removing critical thinking topics or
33 sexual education from the curriculum, dismissing teachers who do not agree with the
34 government ideology, etc. Direct physical attacks against education personnel for teaching
35 democratic citizenship and critical thinking are also on the rise.

36 4. Among the difficulties encountered by teachers, we must be attentive to the pressure
37 exerted by sectarian movements which lead teachers to practice self-censorship when they
38 have to address certain subjects related to their course. We cannot tolerate teachers
39 avoiding to teach part of their curriculum for fear of being threatened with physical or
40 psychological harm or by attacking their professional integrity.

41 5. The professional autonomy of teachers has been increasingly violated, exacerbated by the
42 disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. This erosion of autonomy not only
43 undermines the effectiveness of pedagogical practices but also hampers efforts to promote
44 inclusive education.

45 6. Among the numerous challenges is the issue of unprecedented increase of violence in the
46 educational institutions, including cyber violence and harassment. Female teachers, in
47 particular, find themselves at the frontline, vulnerable to both verbal and physical aggression
48 from various sources, including parents. Violence is also among one of the major reasons for
49 young people leaving the teaching profession early in their career.

50 7. In the digital age, social media platforms have become potent tools for the propagation of
51 hate and separation, posing significant challenges for education personnel tasked with
52 navigating this complex terrain. Additionally, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) introduces
53 new uncertainties and risks that necessitate careful consideration in the pursuit of inclusive
54 education.

55 8. Increasing divisiveness and political polarisation among affiliates of education trade unions
56 themselves also makes unions' internal work on ensuring equality, democratic participation,
57 inclusion and political education among union's affiliates especially critical against the
58 indoctrination, populist propaganda and fake news.

59 **Believes that:**

60 1. Education trade unions play a crucial role in not only defending education from political
61 attempts to spread one-sided views, fake news, populist and xenophobic ideologies, and
62 gender and other stereotypes, but also in ensuring that European education systems
63 promote equality and diversity, support and celebrate them in order to create inclusive
64 working and learning environments, especially for personnel and students with disabilities
65 and special needs, as they commit to in the ETUCE Action Plan on Equality, Diversity and
66 Inclusion.

67 2. Commitment to inclusive education that promotes democratic principles and aims to unite
68 people is a social investment into the well-being of the whole society where a social model
69 of an inclusive and peaceful society is created to benefit all its members. Such education also

70 means safe and secure learning and teaching environments based on a positive education
71 environment with a democratic culture of peace, tolerance, equity, inclusiveness,
72 participation and cooperation where the freedoms of opinion and expression are respected
73 and discussions among all members of the education community are encouraged and
74 promoted.

75 **Asserts the commitment of ETUCE and member organisations to:**

76 1. Challenge, oppose and campaign against all forms of xenophobia, hate speech, misogyny,
77 sexism, racism and hatred towards any ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, religion,
78 migratory status, abilities, or any other background;

79 2. Demand from European governments to assess the implementation of the Paris Declaration
80 on 'Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-
81 discrimination through education' which was adopted in 2015, and to re-visit the
82 commitments made in it;

83 3. Embed a curriculum that aligns with the democratic values of equality, inclusion, tolerance,
84 non-discrimination and solidarity, presents diversity as an added value, fosters the UN
85 Sustainable Development Goals, and challenges the existing biases and stereotypes through
86 development of critical thinking, digital citizenship and media literacy;

87 4. Ensure that hate speech and manipulation of education are removed from textbooks and
88 any other teaching and learning materials, as well as that biased teaching materials are not
89 imposed on teachers in order to mainstream ideas that lead to discrimination, intolerance,
90 and an atmosphere that is not safe for teachers and students (both within the teaching
91 practice and curriculum);

92 5. Take proactive measures to safeguard democracy through and within education, in the face
93 of rising challenges from populist movements and extreme-right ideologies, through
94 advocating for teaching for democratic citizenship and transmitting human rights-based
95 values, in addition to carrying on the trade union tradition of fighting for democracy;

96 6. Demand that governments invest significant public resources in an inclusive and peaceful
97 society that is based on solid democratic values, as well as in an education that strengthens
98 equality, diversity and inclusion with the view to prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive
99 and responsible citizens and that governments reconsider the investment of public resources
100 in sectors and activities that might perpetuate violence and hatred. ;

101 7. Advocate for initial and continuous professional development programmes both for
102 education personnel and for school leaders to provide adequate and relevant knowledge and
103 tools on how to address hate speech, all kinds of violence, bullying and harassment (including
104 cyber) and discrimination on all possible grounds in the educational institutions;

105 8. Demand to strengthen the focus on the well-being of education personnel and students as
106 the key condition to education for an inclusive and peaceful society, for example through
107 removing the unnecessary administrative burden from teachers, addressing the excessive

- 108 workload, or having mental health policies and practices in every education institution; To
109 succeed in inclusive education, teachers should be able to refer to specific staff who could
110 help them manage specific needed pupils and should benefit a specific training.
- 111 9. Differentiate between governments and political parties with far-right views and citizens
112 (and potentially union affiliates) who support such political parties, and develop specific
113 strategies on how to address them: while unions stand up to governments and political
114 parties populist discourses and attacks, it is important for them to have a dialogue with
115 citizens who support far-right views (e.g. parents, teachers, especially students) and listen to
116 their needs, potentially trying to change their views;
- 117 10. Addressing the potential division and political polarisation among a union's affiliates through
118 dialogue and political education, while applying a zero tolerance policy towards any forms of
119 intolerance, hate speech, discrimination, and violence within trade unions' structures;
- 120 11. Promote the use of inclusive language and inclusive forms of communication (e.g. both
121 digital and printed, social media) in society, education systems (including employment), and
122 within unions themselves.