

PRESS RELEASE

ETUCE calls on the ministers for effective social dialogue on VET reforms following the adoption of the “Osnabrück Declaration”



Today, on 30 November 2020, the ministers of the Education Council, European-level social partners, and the European Commission adopted the [Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies \[1\]](#), the next 5-year strategy for the European Union, EU Candidate Countries and the EEA countries for vocational education and training (VET). ETUCE calls on the ministers responsible for VET to start the implementation of the Declaration with effective social dialogue on VET reforms and with the involvement of the education trade unions.

The *Osnabrück Declaration* focuses on four main areas for the years 2021 to 2025:

1. Resilience and excellence through quality, inclusive and flexible VET
2. Establishing a new lifelong learning culture – relevance of C-VET and digitalisation
3. Sustainability – a green link in VET
4. European Education and Training Area and international VET

Just before the start of the [ETUCE statutory conference](#), we welcome that quality and inclusiveness of VET are included among the main objectives of the *Declaration* which will strengthen the implementation of the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Because of the lack of investment to update the equipment and facilities of the VET institutions, VET is still a second choice of students and parents. We welcome that the *Declaration* underlines several times the need of more investment to the VET sectors.

The *Declaration* highlights that VET teachers and trainers have a great role in ensuring the smooth digital and green transition of education and training. However, we remind that they cannot do it alone without receiving effective support from their ministries and VET institutions on adapting the curriculum, as well as the teaching and learning material to the new needs of the students. This goes together with the improvement of initial and continuous teacher training to be updated and to be truly high quality for all (to-be) teachers and trainers. It is certainly important to ensure better cooperation between VET schools and companies not only to ensure quality apprenticeship places to the VET students but also to support VET teachers' and workshop trainers' professional development within companies. National regulations on who can be a VET teacher or trainer in a school need to be respected when attracting professionals from companies to the teaching profession, as they should obtain the necessary pedagogic and teaching training.

VET cannot become fully attractive without the involvement of the social partners in reforming the VET systems. We support that the Declaration underlines that “*strong partnership with social partners is vital for achieving the objectives and deliverables set out in the Osnabrück Declaration.*” We call on the ministers responsible for VET to start the implementation

of the *Declaration* with effective social dialogue on VET reforms and with the involvement of the education trade unions. Moreover, we welcome that the Declaration underlines that the attractiveness of the teaching profession need to be increased. Finally, we call on the ministers to ensure better working conditions and salaries for teachers in order to attract the best candidates to the VET teaching profession and to safeguard their retention. In the COVID-19 crisis specific attention should be paid to the health and safety and mental support to the VET teachers.

[1] [The Osnabrück Declaration on vocational education and training as an enabler of recovery and just transitions to digital and green economies](#) presents a set of policy priorities in VET for the period of 2021-2025 complementing the [Council Recommendation on vocational education and training for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience](#), adopted the same day.

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The [European Trade Union Committee for Education \(ETUCE\)](#) represents 132 Education Trade Unions and 11 million teachers in all countries of Europe, 4.2 million teachers in the EU, from all levels of the education sector. ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at the EU level and a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is the European Region of **Education International**, the global federation of teacher unions.

