



**A European Project by ETUCE and EFEE:
“Recruitment and retention in the education sector, a matter of social
dialogue”**

Joint recommendations to the ESSDE

With the following recommendations the European social partners in education, represented by the European Trade Union Committee in Education (ETUCE) and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) summarise the results of their joint European project “Recruitment and retention in the education sector, a matter of social dialogue”. The project emerged in March 2011 at a meeting of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education’s (ESSDE) Working Group on Demographic Challenges (WG2). The proposal was based on the social partners’ decision to work on the issue “The ageing of the workforce and its consequences at sectoral level for recruitment and retention”¹.

In particular, it was agreed to focus on the specific topic of the recruitment and retention of the workforce in education as a matter of common interest. The working group planned to analyse the situation in all EU member states in order to draw possible important lessons and to provide future recommendations on how to support and to promote the professional group of teachers. It was suggested that “discussion and facts findings over these issues will shape working group’s work towards a proposal of action, e.g. guidelines or framework of action for benchmarking and improving the existing retention and recruitment policies”².

Based on experiences gained from this project the European sectoral social partners in education note that:

1. According to the Council of the European Union (EU) “education and training have a fundamental role to play in achieving the ‘Europe 2020’ objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, notably by equipping citizens with the skills and competences which the European economy and European society need in order to remain competitive and innovative, but also by helping to promote social cohesion and inclusion.”³ But, as pointed

¹ “ESSDE, Working Group2: The demographic challenges. Orientation paper”, 2012, p.1

² Ibid.

³ Official Journal of the European Union: Council conclusions on the role of education and training in the implementation of the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy,(2011/C 70/01), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:070:0001:0003:EN:PDF>

out in the Eurydice report “Key Data on Education in Europe 2012”⁴, the education systems in a number of EU member states could soon experience a shortage of qualified teachers. The results of this project back up this assessment. The survey shows that the education sector in several European countries experience a quantitative shortage of teachers, especially in certain subjects and in disadvantaged or remote schools. Eurydice’s recent report on teachers’ and school heads’ salaries and allowances in Europe 2011/12 also reflects that a rising number of countries in Europe have either reduced or even frozen teachers’ salaries.⁵

2. A general problem in some EU member states is that financial conditions for public services have become more constrained due to the economic crisis. In some countries this has led to job insecurity and its negative consequences.
3. More needs to be done in some countries to support newly qualified teachers and thus to avoid young teachers looking for alternatives and leaving the profession too early. More attention is needed in some countries to ensure that workloads are manageable and to prevent stress at work for teachers in bigger classes and at so-called difficult schools. In order to attract the best possible candidates to the teaching profession it is important that both working conditions and salaries are maintained as attractive as possible.
4. Crucially, it is important to raise the status of the teaching profession and to promote public respect for the profession.
5. All these issues need to be addressed nationally in the light of national circumstances. Value can be added on a European scale by the European social partners in education by keeping these issues under review and lobbying policy makers to ensure that the recruitment and retention of teachers remains high on national and European agendas.

Based on experiences gained from this project the European sectoral social partners in education conclude that:

1. Education trade unions and employers’ organisations in the European Union have concerns about the recruitment and retention of teachers, in particular about the shortage of teachers qualified for certain core subjects and the resulting impact on the quality of education;
2. The sectoral social partners need to live up to their full responsibility towards the entire education system. Representing their members’ interest they must commit themselves even more deeply to the strengthening of the teaching profession both at national and European level;
3. The national and European social partners in education must *use their influence to improve recruitment and retention policies* in education both in the interest of teachers and students and for the sake of the sector’s best development as part of the whole European economic system.

⁴ Eurydice: “Key Data on Education in Europe 2012”, Brussels 2012, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/134EN.pdf

⁵ Eurydice: “Teachers’ and School Heads’ Salaries and Allowances in Europe, 2011/12”, Brussels 2012, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/facts_and_figures/salaries.pdf

4. Quality in education is a source to growth in Europe. High quality teaching is essential. Well educated teachers as a profession are the key to quality in education. There is a global focus on knowledge and Europe must be competitive. To secure growth and wealth education is one of the answers. Investment in education is a core element of the EU2020 strategy.

Based on experiences gained from this project the European sectoral social partners in education make the following recommendations to the ESSDE Plenary Committee.

1. Continue to monitor this serious issue, about which many schools, teachers and other education workers, students, parents and economic stakeholders in the European Union are concerned;
2. Build on and consolidate these results in their future work, with a possibility to look for further projects on exchange of national practices
3. To consider strategies to address job insecurity and its negative consequences.
4. Remind national policy makers and decision makers of their full responsibility to:
 - develop new strategies and introduce sectoral reform programmes aimed at enhancing the attractiveness of the teaching profession i.e. initial teacher education, induction phase, continuous professional development, terms and conditions, mobility, gender balance, additional teachers in certain subjects;
 - Enhance the image and the public perception of the teaching profession.
5. Launch and engage in a cross-sectoral dialogue with other stakeholders since recruitment and recruitment issues does not only affect the education sector. These issues concern every economic sector, as each sector needs highly educated, well-trained and qualified employees.

Endorsed at the plenary meeting of the ESSDE on 8 November 2012