

Joint ETUCE/EFEE Statement On Enhancing And Promoting Gender Equality In And Through Education

Brussels, 8 March 2022

Gender equality is a fundamental right enshrined in the international and EU treaties, declarations and legislation, providing in particular for equal treatment and equal pay for men and women, as well as for protection from gender-based violence and harassment. Education is both the sector with the second highest representation of female workers in the European labour market and the sector that plays the most crucial role in enhancing gender equality in the society. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the crucial importance of the education sector and social aspects of teaching and learning as it plays a key role in thrusting ahead gender equalities in societies. However, the pandemic also magnified gender inequalities in our societies causing for women a significant increase in family-related and care work, short-term and part-time employment contracts, increased gender-based violence and harassment (especially online), as well as less training opportunities. Furthermore, online and hybrid teaching also resulted in education personnel facing new challenges related to quick adjustment towards remote teaching, disruptions in the work-life balance and psychological distress.

In this context and on the occasion of the International Women's Day, the European Social Partners in Education, the ETUCE (European Trade Union Committee for Education) and EFEE (European Federation of Education Employers) reconfirm their commitment to jointly address the promotion of inclusion, equity and equal opportunities, including gender equality in education as expressed in the [Joint ETUCE/EFEE Declaration](#) "Towards a Framework of Action on the attractiveness of teaching profession". Social Partners in Education recognise that they have a vital role to play in promoting and enhancing gender equality in education as a key factor of attracting qualified and committed workers to the teaching profession, improving its status and perception in the society, and ensuring that teachers and other education personnel feel appreciated and supported. This includes sustainable investment priorities on education and training (including in the framework of the recovery and resilience funds and policies) and decent salaries free of gender pay gaps, sustainable working conditions, healthy and safe education environments and the well-being of teachers and other education personnel, entitlement to quality and inclusive initial education and continuous professional development and attractive career paths. Valued, supported and well-prepared education personnel is a key to the provision of equality and inclusive education ensuring diverse role models for students with the view to respond to diverse needs of individual women and men in Europe.

Following the European cross-sectoral social partners [Framework of Actions on Gender Equality](#) and with the view to exploit the potential of social dialogue further to enhance gender equality in the education sector, the European Social Partners in Education commit to:

- **Addressing stereotypes** in relation to perceptions of women's and men's roles in the household and caring responsibilities, the labour market and public life, as well as their capabilities and skills, including addressing existing imbalances in study fields and the teaching profession. Providing **relevant training** for teachers, schools leaders and other education personnel on how to promote an equal role of men and women in education, education institutions and consequently society as a whole is crucial to address these issues. In this regard, the school curricula, textbooks, administrative practices, leisure time activities and the whole learning and teaching environment also plays a significant role.
- Raising the **social status of the teaching profession** in Europe, and improving working conditions of teachers, school leaders and other education personnel, including career opportunities, with the view to make teaching profession in all education sectors attractive and based on equal opportunities for both men and women;
- Searching for policy solutions (including improving work-life balance) in order to make **high-level and decision-making positions** in the education sector **more accessible for women**
- Enhancing the recognition and value of the work of women who work in all education sectors so that they are better paid, have better career opportunities and a higher professional prestige;
- Eliminating **gender-based violence and harassment**, especially cyber-bullying, and ensuring safe and secure learning and teaching environments for all students and education personnel, based on mutual respect, trust and universal values. Following the implementation of the [European Social Partners' Framework Agreement on Harassment and Violence at Work](#) and in the framework of the [ILO Convention and Recommendation on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work](#), European Social Partners in Education promote development of the comprehensive education institution action plans and policies (including training, risk assessment, mediation and victim support), which encompass all types of violence and harassment.

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Daniel Wisniewski
General Secretary, EFEE



Susan Flocken
European Director, ETUCE