



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación

<http://www.ei-ie.org>

ETUCE

European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

EUROPEAN REGION- ETUCE

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EI / ETUCE Action and Campaign Framework on the Economic Crisis

Aim of the campaign and actions:

- To set the focus for the public and governments on the economic crisis' negative impact on education.
- To draw the attention of the public and governments to the significant importance of investing in education during the economic crisis.
- To make it clear to the public and governments that a social crisis is emerging and threatens both the education systems and society at large.
- To make it clear for the public and governments that there are alternatives to the austerity measures.
- To advocate for alternative economic solutions amongst members and the public.
- To advocate the view to the public that the economic crisis was not made by the working people and that it is wrong only letting the working people pay the bill.
- To defend Teacher's and other public workers' salaries, pensions and working conditions.
- To defend democracy and the European Model preserving The Social Dialogue.
- To defend the right for all citizens to be heard on significant issues, like the change of the European Treaty.
- To show internal solidarity amongst members cross border and strengthen the unity and membership of EI/ETUCE.

Slogans:

"Teachers against Austerity", "Enough is Enough", "No cuts in Education", "Save Education", "We didn't make the crisis".

The Campaign framework:

- Based on earlier experience there is a need for a more comprehensive action framework and at the same time respecting the complete sovereignty of each Member Organisation.
- There is a need to advocate and show more broadly the negative sides of the economic crisis and to generate change there is a need to explain and promote our views to the public of who created the crisis and how credible alternatives can work.
- There is a need for showing a more collective front against the austerity measures and internally show solidarity with members cross border.

The action/campaign framework is therefore based on decisions taken by Member Organisations supplied with central European elements decided by the ETUCE. The frame will include a possibility for all Member Organisations to make it visible what kind of

actions are being planned and when, feeding into an ETUCE central overview and press/public promotion. At the same time ETUCE will make it possible to actively upload pictures, films and blog on all events. In this way all events can be made European, exposed to other Member Organisations, the individual members and the press. Furthermore and open access to comment and debate will support the interest.

Time:

- Join the decentralised ETUC Action day on the 29 February
- Meeting with MEPs during the ETUCE Committee meeting 27-28 March
- In the period 15 March to 20 April featuring specific countries and making solidarity pressure on Governments with targeted emails from all organisations and press releases.
- Decentralised actions decided by MOs to coincide with the EI Global Action Week 23-28 April 2012

Activities:

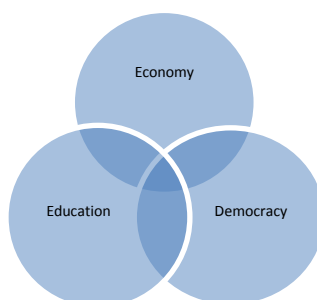
1. Member organisation is asked to decide how they can contribute to the general framework and to appoint a contact person.
2. ETUCE will carry out a mini-survey amongst MO's on the current impact of the crisis on education and working conditions. Should be ready for the ETUCE Committee meeting in March.
3. Organised solidarity to specific countries by email.

Tools:

1. Website: Communication platform: Plans, events, blogs, Press releases, posters, slogans, documents, pictures, videos. Including a national possibility for upload directly.
2. ETUCE and National Press releases and press meetings in Brussels and European capitals.
3. Bureau Members participation in national events.
4. ETUCE statements to support the actions/campaign.

Background:

The action and campaign framework is based on the triangle: Economy-Education-Democracy, the issues and the values that are in the centre of the concern of all Member Organisations EI / ETUCE. These elements are central for a complete and comprehensive approach:



EI / ETUCE believes that education, economy and democracy are integrated and indispensable elements balanced in any modern and sustainable society building on welfare, quality and equality for all. The European Treaty was built on values and principles that should protect the citizens, the trade unions and promote equality and sustainability for all. Regrettably we see a development of setting aside the social dialogue, cuts in education and the dismissal of thousands of teachers across Europe.

1. Economy

Since the Economic Crisis started in 2008 it has developed into a more serious situation. It started with the bail out of many of the big banks and financial corporations, which by a greedy and relentless attitude created a bubble in expectation to profit even more. Despite the fact that no European countries (apart from Greece) had any really significant sovereign debt (40 -80% of GDP) by 2008, we are now in a situation where several European countries have excessive sovereign debts created to avoid the first financial crisis created by the banks, leading to downgrade by the international rating institutions, sending the interest rates to heaven for financing this debt and bringing several countries in potential danger of default.

The only answer to this has been austerity measures of a kind that would have been unforeseeable just 2 years ago. Repeated austerity is a vicious circle leading to less tax revenue and the need for even more austerity. The risk of a real and deep recession is apparent.

2. Education

Education is not only facing the consequences of the crisis; it is facing the consequences of the lack of vision and courage of policymakers. We must assert yet again, that education as a core investment for the future of Europe is a key part of the solution to the economic crisis. Slashing education and other public services at this time is not only unfair and unhelpful: it is actually deepening the crisis and causing long-term damage to our economic prospects and the fabric of our societies. The economic crisis is being used in a number of countries to impose deeply ideological and controversial neo-conservative policies as if they were objective responses to crisis. Education is recognized as an essential investment for the well-being of people, both present and future, especially in the context of an economic crisis, by all stakeholders and observers. The Council of Europe, the Council of the European Union as well as all the national governments' high level representatives, all have, at some point, admitted this basic truth. The gap between the wide recognition of the importance of education and the behaviour of many national governments since the beginning of the crisis illustrates the vulnerability of education in a political context dominated by short-term solutions.

3. *Democracy*

Basic trade union rights are denied to the teachers in some countries in Europe, forcing the teacher unions in these countries to act outside of any institutional recognition and, in some cases, facing legal or even physical threats against their representatives. The Social Dialogue is under threat; collective bargaining systems are set aside by Governments eager to impose even more austerity. In some countries so called technocrat governments has taken over, governments that have not been elected by the citizens.

In situations where the basic trade unions rights are under attack, removed or set aside it is not only an attack on teachers but basically on the public service sector and society as a whole. This is not only a very worrying development, it is an unacceptable development.

A new policy is needed:

Education International and the European Region, ETUCE have been actively engaged in various relations such as the Global Unions, ITUC and ETUC discussing alternative ways to approach the economic crisis.

EI, together with other Global Unions, have supported a number of measures to combat the crisis. It has worked with others to influence the G20, the IMF and the World Bank, the ILO and the OECD and others. Among the Global Unions proposals are:

- Global regulation of financial markets to reduce their dominant role in the global economy and restore them as a support for the real economy and productive investment;
- A broad range of urgent actions for jobs and recovery, including a focus on youth unemployment, in order to create good, secure employment.
- Employment measures, including enhanced education and training, which will ensure the long-term generation of good, sustainable jobs; a central element of the fight against inequality and poverty;
- Responding to the challenges of climate change in a way that has a real, demonstrable impact on carbon emissions, creates green jobs, and strengthens social sustainability;
- Impose fair taxes that would raise greater revenue from the upper income groups and corporations and fight tax fraud and evasion, close loopholes and crack down on tax havens;
- The Financial Transaction Tax, a measure which would not only generate revenue, but would inhibit rapid financial transactions; making financial markets more stable and less dangerous;
- Fully respect trade union rights and promote strong systems of collective bargaining and social dialogue to help build fairness and democracy; Make social protection more comprehensive including through the creation of a global social protection floor supported by adequate funding;

- Oppose austerity measures and maintain government capacity, so that it can govern effectively, deliver effective services, and be relevant and credible, including with respect to measures to influence and affect the direction of the economy ;
- Support quality public services, especially quality education services, as an important means to overcome the crisis, but also as a way to sustain societies, build democracy, and improve the quality of life.

Specifically concerning the EU, the ETUCE has supported the ETUC actions and statements including the following proposals:

- The introduction of Eurobonds;
- A partial transfer of national sovereign debt into European debt up to 60% of GDP;
- Setting up a European Bank for sovereign debt with access to the ECB's liquidity operations;
- A European public rating agency;
- A European investment programme to revive the hardest hit economies, helping distressed economies to restructure debt; investment in infrastructure and jobs for a transition to an energy- and resource-efficient model;
- Dropping the co-financing requirements for the structural funds for countries in difficulties and the involvement of trade unions in the management of projects;
- New sources of European taxes such as an FTT; a harmonisation of the corporate tax base along with a minimal tax rate as part of limiting fiscal dumping; and action on tax evasion and the abolition of tax havens.

Previous actions taken:

- Since the start of the crisis our European Confederation, the ETUC, has been organising a series of large-scale Euro-demonstrations in different European capitals as a sign of objection against this situations. The ETUCE and its member organisations have actively participated in all manifestations protesting against further austerity measures such as budget cuts in the education sector and job losses.
- In accordance with the decision taken by EI management, it was agreed at the ETUCE Committee Meeting in 2011 including the economic crisis as an issue in all meetings and activities taking place prior to the 2012 conference.
- In January 2012 the ETUCE organised a special meeting on the consequences of the crisis and on the way the public authorities have reacted to it on education and training. The special meeting focused on a European approach of how to tackle the crisis and the role played by education for the European economy to exit the crisis. The successful meeting was attended the European Commissioner for Education and Culture, Ms Androulla Vassiliou. It received a high level of interest by ETUCE member organisations.

EI/ ETUCE / ETUC policy references :

As the economic crisis has continued to expand the EI / ETUCE has moved the topic right into the very centre of its activities. A special webpage has been launched and is being updated regularly:

- http://etuce.homestead.com/ETUCE_2010_Crisis.html.
- Several international statements taking into account direct impacts of the crisis on the education sector have been published so far: ETUCE General statement on the economic crisis, 2011:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2011/201110/ETUCE_Committee_Statement_Crisis_ENG.pdf
- To the Council of the European Union Members, in preparation to the Council Meeting – May 2011:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2011/ETUCE_Statement-EYC_Council_041911.pdf
- To the Council and the Commission in preparation of the G8/G20 summit, June 2010:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2010/ETUCE_statement_to_EU_on_G20.pdf

Other statements have taken up some countries' most threatening problems caused by their governments' drastic financial measures:

- The ETUCE calls for a moratorium on austerity policies in Portugal:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2011/201111/ETUCE_statement_Portugal_161111.pdf
- ETUCE calls for action in solidarity with Greece:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2011/201110/ETUCE_Committee_statement_Greece_eng.pdf
- Statement by ETUCE on the situation in Portugal:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2011/Statement_by_ETUCE_on_the_situation_in_Portugal.pdf
- Statement by ETUCE on the situation in Greece:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2011/Statement_by_ETUCE_on_the_situation_in_Greece_eng.pdf
- Statement by EI and ETUCE on the situation in Romania:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2009/PES_Statement_-_Romania_-_April_09.pdf
- Statement by EI and the ETUCE on the situation in Latvia:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2009/PES_Statement_-_Latvia_-_April_09.pdf
- Statement by ETUCE on the situation in Hungary:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2009/ETUCE_HU_Statement_051109.pdf

- ETUCE statement on the teachers' layoffs in 2009 in Finland:
http://etuce.homestead.com/Statements/2009/ETUCE_statement_FI_031009.pdf

Reference can also be made to the following 2011 EI World Congress resolutions. In Cape Town, South Africa, the Congress issued:

- 1.2.4. "The crisis should not affect our school model" available at
http://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/1.2.4E_Crisis_and_School_Model.pdf
- 1.2.6. "Trade union action against neoliberal policies and austerity plans in Europe" available at <http://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/1.2.6EUrgentNeoliberalPoliciesAusterity.doc>

Finally, the ETUCE wants to draw attention to the European Trade Union Confederation's (ETUC) special webpage highlighting various aspects and the European trade union movement's strategies to cope with the economic and social crisis. It refers to the ETUC's recent positions and activities in the framework of its campaign to combat the crisis. A list of declarations, open letters and resolutions such as more information on the Euro-Demonstrations can be found on: <http://www.etuc.org/r/1378> and <http://www.etuc.org/a/5838>.